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THE MELODY FROM MARS

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THE MELODY FROM MARS

BY
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The name Lilian Leslie represents a collaboration
of Violet *Lilian* Perkins and Archer *Leslie* Hood



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A romance in which are interwoven some
principles of fundamental psychology
illustrating the creative laws of the super-
conscious mind.

THE MELODY FROM MARS

PROLOGUE

Have you ever attended an opera on Mars? For the benefit of those who have not had that privilege and pleasure I am going to relate the story of a matinee attended by three lovely children one winter afternoon in the month of June.

Winter in June seems startling to us, but the entire principle of life on Mars is an inversion of the laws governing our lives here. Planets, like human beings and all other forms of creation, breathe, as it were, expanding and contracting with regularity, and while the period of expansion or contraction may last millions of years it is sure to have its beginning and ending.

Mars has passed through this phase of breathing four times. Each time at the extreme of her expansion period she has thrown off a part of herself which became fixed within the radius of her own law of gravity and held, as it were, between the two polarities, the positive polarity of

the sun and the positive polarity of Mars, thus holding the relationship of moons to the mother planet. At the present time Mars is well developed on the fifth era of expansion; in fact, so far that the relationships of expressive life have passed beyond the law of inversion. To make this plainer, the sense of vision on Mars depends upon the direct electrical agitation or effervescence of objects, flowers or foliage, or any other form of creative expression on the surface of the planet. That is to say the intensity of the motion of cohesion which holds electrons together is so slight that the electrons fail to reflect sunlight and day becomes night, while in the night the wonderful effervescence or electrical activity of the electrons sends off colors as the flowers on this planet send off fragrance.

The atmospheric pressure on Mars is so slight that the inhabitants are obliged to have safety signals at a certain distance from the surface of the planet beyond which aerial travel becomes dangerous. Like the tide of our own ocean, the undertow becomes stronger than the incoming tide and it is necessary to put out danger signals. For on Mars it is as easy to navigate the atmosphere as it is for us to swim in the water, but just as dangerous when traveling beyond a certain point in the atmosphere, as it is for a person in the ocean to get caught in the strong under-

tow. There is a point, however, where the law of gravity is so slight that anybody with sufficient cohesive activity can gather to himself enough voltage to break the law of gravity and disappear from the planet.

You may have expected by my intent to describe the opera to hear of some wonderful singer, but such is not the case, for no personalities participate in the opera except those who perform in the orchestra.

The instruments on Mars are of an entirely different nature from those of our orchestras here, many of them producing vibratory rates so much faster than any which we use that we would not be able to hear them at all, but their instruments have a direct action on the electrons.

The opera opens in total darkness, but as the music continues, a pale white light becomes visible which gradually changes color. Little by little the complementary colors separate, controlled in their motion and activity by the rendering of the most exquisite music imaginable. As this music with its crescendos and diminuendos continues, these electrons seek companions of their own vibratory rate and now, with a motion of the baton guiding the performance, they form into beautiful creations of flowers and foliage until one feels that God has shown His presence. Nor are two performances ever the same, each

opera being an entirely new creation depending upon the wonderful genius of the conductor.

The three children with the exquisite melodies of one of the most inspiring of these operas still ringing in their ears, left the theatre for their return homeward. Enthused by the extreme emotional stimulation from this performance, the last one they were to hear for many centuries, is it a wonder they became over-careless in the games that were to follow?

In the evening when the sun has disappeared, a rich purple veil of ethereal delicacy hangs overhead and in this mysterious atmosphere it is very easy to become invisible. On the night which this prologue announces, the children were playing at their favorite game, aerial polo. The fascination of this game lay in the tendency of the balls, which were made of compressed atmosphere—a heavier substance than that of the planet—to rise rapidly from the center and mysteriously fly off into space.

The children, filled with the ecstasy of the glorious music they had heard during the afternoon, were unusually active and enthusiastic at their games and perhaps a little more daring than usual. The thrill of the opera seemed to lure them into dangerous paths for without hesitation or heed they frolicked joyously among the mist of flowers. And yet at moments the boy was

seen by his sister and their young girl companion to stop in his playing and dream as if haunted by the melody of the opera; then arousing himself, the next instant he entered more vigorously into the game.

It was in one of these moments of dreaming that the game was forgotten and the balls gained great headway and suddenly vanished. The children, not realizing how near the danger line they were, ran gleefully off in pursuit of the disappearing balls. In another instant they had become enveloped and lost in the purple haze surrounding them and all three vanished as suddenly and mysteriously as had their balls.

It is around the incarnation of these three souls that our story is woven.

CHAPTER I

To the inner consciousness time and space are unknown. Therefore to translate this romance to the mind of the reader, we will place the date within the Twenty-first Century.

Emerging from old world conflicts and upheavals of every kind involving the human race, the people of the early part of the century were becoming adjusted to the new era of expansion. They entered upon their daily existence with a profound intensity and they made rapid strides in the creative and scientific fields—they were the pioneers of a new epoch in the world's evolution.

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Deep within a glorious valley sheltered on the north, east and south by a magnificent chain of snow-capped mountains, lies the picturesque City of Salt Lake. On its western boundary are the blue salt waters of the Great Salt Lake, held prisoner by the hills beyond and where innumerable sea-gulls have their playground.

It is here that the glory of the rising and setting sun exists in all its extreme splendor, a

source of inspiration to the artist and weary-hearted alike, and to the enthusiasm of creative youth. This is the place from which our story unfolds.

It is eventide and we turn our glance from the picture in the west to catch the reflection on the eastern horizon. Just as the sun is beginning to touch the rim of the Occident, pink hues steal over the blanketed peaks, leaving traces of magic light no brush can duplicate on canvas. While the sun is gilding the west, we pause to catch the golden sheen reflected by the windows of the universities and dwellings and are enchanted by a scene as much like fairyland as the mind can conceive. Pent-up cares vanish and are forgotten for the moment, if not altogether through the magic of this scene of coloristic splendor. But our picture does not long remain in view for it quickly fades into dull twilight and the departing sun flashes to the mountains its last evening caress, and the afterglow has other beauties all its own.

Melville Vinson was an artist of ability, yet the true merit of his work had not been early recognized and only in these later years were his paintings beginning to meet with the favor of the public and the approval of the critics, and at last through unceasing toil, he was approaching the lofty heights to which he aspired. His art was

greatly enriched by the wondrous, untamed beauty which this historic and lovely valley furnished.

His charming wife was deeply devoted to and very much in love with her husband, and her interest in his work was a tremendous source of inspiration to Melville Vinson. She was a true daughter of the Northwest, reared in that Great Alaskan country where we find big, clean hearts; human emotions stripped of all pretense; souls responding to the depth and beauty and voice of nature in all her varying moods—where under the glow of a rich moon one may wander alone through the darkening forests, singing, laughing, knowing no fear. Her eyes were of a deep wistful blue, the blue that one sees in the sky of that country of ice, snow and grandeur. Her skin was clear and delicate and its soft texture was accentuated by the dull, haunting gold of her hair.

They had one child, a lad of eleven—a strange boy for one of such tender years. Music had early become part of his activities. When at a very early age he had displayed an innate talent for the violin his father and mother affectionately nurtured the blossoming flower. Instead of spending his play hours with his boy companions he would take his violin and steal away to the side of a murmuring stream where his sensitive ear

caught many of the hidden melodies of the world of nature and under the touch of his fingers they were put into his own creation. But on many occasions he had one other companion, a fair-haired girl two years his senior, with whom he had grown up from early childhood. She, too, was very fond of his music and shared the coveted companionship of his violin. As mere children playing together she had cultivated an affection for and interest in him, akin to that of a sister's. She was tenderly sympathetic, understanding his childish moods with a woman's intuition, and they delighted to indulge in dreams of future glory when he would be a great musician with the world at his feet—rare and wonderful dreams of childhood.

His youthful imagination wove into creation fantastic and mysterious melodies, and the restless streams of music coursing through his mind brought many changing moods.

One evening, while seated on the veranda with his mother, deeply absorbed, and mechanically picking out a tune on his violin, he suddenly clasped his mother's hand and whispered:

"Oh, mother, see! She is so beautiful, her eyes are so dark and tender! And I can hear my melody. Oh! it seems so vague, so very far away." He paused, "And now it is gone again."

"Lesaria, dear, what is it you see?" asked his

mother. He started, aroused from this reverie at the sound of her voice.

"At times I have been haunted by bits of a strange melody—like a spirit it wanders through my memory, then it suddenly disappears like a phantom in the dark. But just now a beautiful girl appeared before me and that same melody came back to me so vague, yet so wondrous."

"Perhaps some day, Lesaria dear, this beautiful girl will come as a real being into your life, bringing the melody with her like a Light from above."

"Oh, I hope so, Mother!"

Having begun his musical education at the age of five with a renowned teacher, Lesaria's future career was looked forward to with much enthusiasm. His instructor declared he would become the greatest violinist of the day. He was America's genius, American born and educated, and the entire world would pay homage to him.

CHAPTER II

To the artist who is in harmony with the ever-changing glory of the heavens, there is no more inspiring sight than a golden autumn day in the valley in which the City of Salt Lake nestles, when nature is resplendent in all her wild and magnificent beauty, when sublimity mingles with the somber, the fantastic with the calm and serene. Such a day was this, as the first rays of the morning sun crept above the snow-capped mountain peaks and shed its rosy gleam over the valley. But was there not something, too, of tragedy in such solemn, yet brilliant beauty? Has there not been some moment in each of our lives, filled with a rare beauty and happiness and yet shadowed by an impending sorrow or danger—an incomprehensible warning?

Melville Vinson had of late been doing some sketching which necessitated his making frequent trips to Bird Island, a picturesque little island on the western boundary of the Great Salt Lake, the home of myriad flocks of seagulls. From there he could obtain a better outline of the Lake and

the surrounding islands and the beauty of the sunset was exceedingly effective.

On this particular morning he was more than eager to get an early start, as there appeared to be a rare color in the sky which he hoped to duplicate upon the canvas. With an ardent "good-bye" he left his wife busy with her household duties, and Lesaria, as usual, with his violin and morning's practice.

Lesaria had spent perhaps an hour in rather desultory playing when unconsciously his fingers and bow began to wander listlessly over the strings and from his violin came a strange, mournful strain, like a solemn dirge for the dead.

"And why, Lesaria," asked his mother in a tone of grave tenderness, "is your playing so filled with sadness this morning?"

"I do not know, mother. Somehow I feel it within my heart, and in my fingers, and those solemn notes seem to awaken from the grave."

His mother kissed him gently on the forehead. "Ah! You are such a strange lad, Lesaria, such a dreamer." And one fancied a saddened tinge in the wistful smile that flitted across her beautiful features.

Evening with all its deepening glory was approaching; the sky was aflame with color; the clouds on the eastern mountains reflected its glow. The trees were swaying mildly in the eve-

ning air. But was there not a warning in the sudden, calm dark red glow of the sky and the deep purple shadows playing upon the mountain-tops? Those thick-gathering clouds in the west! What message were they bringing as they rolled in black depths across the heavens? The branches of the trees were now twisting and moaning and creaking under the intensity of the wind! Was not that the faint echo of thunder? Nearer and nearer came its throbbing moan. Another instant and one great crash seemed to have rent the heavens asunder for the rain came down in torrents. It was quickly over, however. Those thunder showers of the autumn days were of short duration. But it had taken its toll; relentless, cruel it had been in its brevity.

Melville Vinson had been the victim of the angry storm and the violence of the Great Salt Lake. Not realizing the swiftness with which the storm was approaching, the artist had gotten but half-way across the lake when the motors of the launch in which he was traveling alone became clogged with the salt deposited by the spray of the waves that lashed about it. Although the water of the lake is heavy, containing a deposit of twenty-five per cent salt, it takes but a slight atmospherical disturbance to arouse it.

As the waves continued to lash relentlessly about the launch, leaving a heavy deposit of salt

within and without, it soon became weighted down and in an instant capsized, leaving its victim struggling helplessly, yet bravely, in the water, in a grim battle with death. How fruitless the effort! The first stages of strangulation were upon him! With what horror did the realization of such a death come to him! The salt spray was filling his nostrils, his throat. And then with a last frantic, choking call to his loved ones, he stiffened in death.

Some hours later his body was found by a rescue party, floating on the surface of the calmed waters. Over him was a shroud of cold, glistening, crystal spray. His features were distorted and bore the marks of the horrible agony of his death.

Clutched in his hand was the cherished painting he had completed that day. It had been wrapped with special care as if he half feared something was going to happen to it.

Into its brilliant pigments he had seemed to blend all the joys and sufferings of his too short life. It was indeed a masterpiece.

The pall of grief hung over the home from which he had so joyously departed that morning. The grim tragedy cast a gloom over heart and brain, yet his wife and son struggled as bravely in their grief as he had for life.

CHAPTER III

In the two years which have elapsed since the death of Melville Vinson, the gaunt form of poverty stalked many times through the home from which he had been so suddenly taken. The health of Mrs. Vinson had been so impaired by the sudden shock of her husband's death that it was difficult to engage in steady employment and Lesaria was yet too young to have the burden of her support.

Mrs. Vinson was not a good business woman, when it came to the selling of her husband's paintings. They each held for her a fond memory and she cherished them as if they were her family of babies. The most highly prized of her husband's work was the painting which had been his final effort, his masterpiece. That she guarded as she would a child, yet realizing the day was not far off when it with others would of necessity have to be sold to provide food and warmth for herself and son.

Then as if Fate had decreed otherwise, early one chilling December morning, Fire, that Demon of Destruction, destroyed the home which shel-

tered the family of Melville Vinson and the paintings which had been his life's work.

For many weeks Lesaria Vinson lay hovering between life and death as the result of severe burns obtained in his escape from the burning structure. For weeks, too, his mother lay in a semi-comatose condition as the result of this added shock. Indeed it seemed as if misfortune had made its permanent abode in that home.

The shroud of darkness hangs heavily at times and then comes that rare moment in which one catches a faint glimmer of light and the heart responds, almost afraid, half-hoping, half-doubting.

Lilith, the pretty fair-haired companion of Lesaria's early childhood, had been favored more kindly by Fortune and as childhood budded into more serious youth with its greater trials and sorrows for Lesaria her life blossomed in full glory. She had been away to school for the past two years and the misfortune of her friends was quite unknown to her. Extremely wealthy in her own right she had never known the pangs of poverty, yet she was most sensitive to all suffering. It was now her desire that the great wealth she possessed should be of service to Mrs. Vinson and Lesaria. Lilith realized he had a brilliant future before him could he but complete his musical education.

It was but a few months later, after having fully recovered from his illness and his mother having been restored to health, that Lesaria Vinson stood once again before his teacher, ready and eager to continue his lessons, the first since the death of his father.

The flame of genius is a beacon light that smoulders at times but when the soul has fully awokened and has responded to its creative responsibilities the flame bursts into being and illumines the entire world.

And so Lesaria Vinson was destined to illumine the world with his music.

CHAPTER IV

When Lilith was but an infant, her father had strangely disappeared and she had grown up without knowing the father love, but the devotion with which she reverenced her mother was the noblest ideal of her young life. She often wondered about her father, but when she questioned her mother regarding him a hurt look would steal over her face and she sensed that her mother did not care to talk upon the subject. But many thoughts would come into her mind concerning him and she had a keen desire to know him. If he should suddenly return would she love him as she did her mother? And how would her father feel toward her—would *he* love her?

For the past three years Lilith had been devoting her activities to the Art of the Drama. She was an eager student, ambitious and seeking always for some new adventure.

It was the eve of her début in a star part and in the dressing room she was being robed as a princess. She stood erect in her stately beauty, queenly and dignified—her attendants now putting into place a stray lock or smoothing out a

bit of lace, or laying a delicate fold in the rich velvet of her robe.

"Alas!" she said, turning to one of her admiring attendants, in answer to a word of praise, "it is a fancy of mine, this life behind the scenes," then added, half sadly, "even it does not satisfy me. Oh, yes! it is a glorious art, but somehow I long for something more comprehensive. I do not like to feel that I am bound down by the limitations of the stage. I have enjoyed my work, but soon I shall seek a new field."

The call boy appeared—it was time for the entrance of the Princess. Lilith was unusually nervous. The theatre was crowded to capacity. Out of the darkness of the multitude of faces that looked eagerly upon her, she could discern her mother's and this gave her renewed strength and courage.

As the play progressed, she observed a man seated in the front row with an intent gaze bent upon her. He studied every movement that she made. Lilith fancied she had seen him at some time, but the memory was a dim one. Just before the final curtain he arose and went quickly out of the theatre.

The evening's performance had been a tremendous success and the young star was enthusiastically cheered by the vast audience. When she entered her dressing room she was confronted

by her mother and the man who had observed her so closely while she was upon the stage. For an instant she was held in a strange silence, then her voice broke dramatically.

“Father! Is it father?”

“Yes, my dear, it is your father,” replied her mother quietly.

The man hesitated and in that instant of silence, one thought came to Lilith. “He does not love me.”

Then he stretched out his arms and she moved toward him and kissed him.

“Father,” she murmured. “Where have you been all these years?”

“Roaming the world,” he answered. Then, almost abruptly, “You did splendidly tonight; you have great talent.”

“Thank you. Are you coming home with us, father?”

“No, tonight I leave for other parts of the world. I had heard of you and wished to see you since you had grown into a young lady. But you will not see me again. I am pleased with you and proud of you, my daughter.”

“But father, why this strange behavior? I want to know you, to love you as I do mother. Do not leave us again. I want to always feel your kindly protection; to know that you are in-

terested in my work and that you share with me my hopes and ambitions."

"Ah, but mine is a restless spirit, Lilith; I belong nowhere and everywhere. I could not be happy here. I love you and am proud of you and you will always be conscious of my protective influence. I do not want you to become a wanderer also. But I must go now, try to love me if you can. Goodbye." And he left them gazing after him in bewilderment.

Lilith turned toward her mother.

"What does all this mean, mother dear? He did not speak to you nor you to him."

"We had been speaking before you came in, my dear—there was nothing more to say."

"But it all puzzles me so. Here my own father, whom I have not seen since infancy, mysteriously comes upon the scene and as mysteriously vanishes and neither you nor he offers me an explanation."

"It is best, Lilith, that you have no explanation now. It is a long story that some day I shall tell to you," and the hurt look again came into her mother's face.

"Now, my mother, if it is going to make you sad I will not talk about it any more."

"You were beautiful in your part tonight, my dear, and your acting was superb. I am glad you have made this success."

"I am glad, but not satisfied. I have other ambitions which I hope soon to realize. We are going to travel, too. I know you will like that," exclaimed Lilith with much enthusiasm.

"Ah, I wonder if you also will become a wanderer? Oh, sometimes I am so afraid for you, Lilith!" Then half aloud, her mother repeated, "He was afraid for you also."

"Was father like that mother—a wanderer?"

"Yes," answered her mother simply.

CHAPTER V

A few months later found Lilith and her mother making preparations for a tour of the world. The wanderlust had taken possession of her and against all the entreaties of her mother Lilith had insisted that there was a spirit somewhere in the Eastern World that was calling her to the work she would do in the future.

The blood of adventure ran in the veins of Lilith and her mother realized that she could never be a caged bird. She wished, however, that her daughter would marry Alvan Huntington, the young scientist, and settle down. He was brilliant and desirable—and very much in love with Lilith.

“But mother, I do not love him, why should I make his life and my own miserable? I am not the girl for him,” Lilith was exclaiming as she and her mother were arranging some brilliantly colored autumn leaves in the huge vases about the spacious ball room where a profusion of autumn flowers spread their delicate fragrance. They were putting the final touches to the prep-

arations for an elaborate dinner dance that evening given to their friends as a farewell fête.

Their home, with its spacious grounds, tonight was an iridescent glow of brightly twinkling lights. In the court a magnificent fountain played into the air and in its basin brilliantly colored goldfish swam lazily about. A full moon bathed the broad open gardens in a light of soft loveliness, adding to the scene its delicate charm.

One of the surprises of the evening was the first appearance before an audience of the brilliant violinist, Lesaria Vinson. Quite unexpectedly the guests became aware of beautiful music floating through the rooms. A rich, curiously subtle rhythm that blended with exquisite harmony into the scene of the evening; now gently murmuring like the soft cadence of an evening love-song; then sweeping into a dazzling, trilling passage of emotion and poetic imagery.

The guests were thrilled by Lesaria's playing and expressed the warmest praise and enthusiasm for his art and mastery of the violin at such an early age.

The midnight hour now found the merry party lost in the swaying melodies of dance music. The wealthy Alvan Huntington, with his handsome appearance and prepossessing manner, was the catch of the evening. He was a genial personality with a keen humor and subtle satire. He

loved feminine beauty and was infatuated with every pretty face that he looked upon.

He was particularly charmed with Lilith tonight—her strange moods, her youthful beauty, her regal manner and his inability to penetrate the barrier of an unassuming aloofness which she held towards him. Tonight, her queenly dignity, the flushed beauty of her cheeks, made the heart of young Huntington beat with a wild fervor.

Between the dancing Lilith stole out into the garden for a moment to catch the breath of a delicate, cooling zephyr. As she stood near the fountain watching it send its silvery spray into the air, and as the soft shadows of the moon fell full upon her, she heard a light footstep and glancing around saw Alvan Huntington standing by her side.

He suddenly clasped her hand within his own. "Lilith," he whispered in an intense voice, "I love you, I adore you, I want you!"

She gently drew her hand from his. "No, you do not love me, and I do not love you, Alvan. Please do not let us spoil a perfectly delightful evening."

He dropped his head for an instant, then looked up at her from the depths of his handsome eyes. "But with you, life would be so different, love would be the biggest thing of my life. I

worship you. Tell me that my love is not in vain."

Lilith shook her head. "As a friend I like you immensely—but it can never be love."

"And that is final?" he asked.

"Yes, that is final," and she added softly, "but come, let us go in and you may have the next dance with me."

It was long past midnight when the party of merrymakers dispersed, and as the young hostess bade goodbye to each of the departing guests, their warm words of esteem and affection touched Lilith deeply. To Lesaria Vinson she gave her promise to return within a year that she might be present when he made his *début* before the public.

"That indeed pleases me, and the memory of your words and your promise will urge me on. To feel that I have your supreme faith and kind thoughts is an incentive toward that highest of high goals to which I trust I may prove worthy of attainment." His voice betrayed the depth of emotion with which he spoke.

Lilith gave her hand to Alvan Huntington. "I trust we shall always be friends, Alvan—good-by."

CHAPTER VI

Air travel in this new era of advancement led to many interesting adventures. The heretofore unknown impenetrable spots of the world were linked by the vast chain of air navigation which encircled the entire globe.

North Pole and South Pole, no longer dangerous regions of snow and ice, were within reach of civilization by one day's air travel. Science had been enriched with a knowledge of the meteorology and climatic conditions existing in these localities and at these poles the two greatest radio stations of the world had been established.

Fur-bearing animals, new to civilization, were discovered. The beauty and elegance of their skins commanded fabulous prices and a ready market.

The South Pole proved a fertile field for a new enterprise created by a rare gem remarkable for its formation, which seemed to be a peculiar deposit of the past ages. The warmth and color of the ruby, the brilliancy of the diamond and the soft lustre of the sapphire, were all combined in

the new stone. It was known as the radium diamond.

It is these new regions which are to afford so much of interest to Lilith and her mother on their journey. For the purpose of their world trip Lilith had purchased a luxuriant and attractive aero car. Its outward appearance was of an intense blue tone. The interior fittings and decorations displayed artistic taste and design, the color scheme being the pale blue of the heavens and the gold of the sun. It was divided into several separate compartments, one for baggage, one for the pilot and his own private quarters, and the remaining compartments comprised the living and sleeping quarters of the passengers, which included a handsome library, a lounging room, and various cozy parlors.

The car was propelled by electricity and by pressing a tiny button the doors silently and quickly opened and closed. Halsner, the pilot, was at his wheel, where two electric buttons were all that were necessary to set in motion the minute apparatus of the car. One button was for the purpose of starting it and the other regulated the speed. At his right hand sparkled a tiny yellow light and from its varied glow was determined the altitude of flight. The higher the car arose the brighter and more powerful became the light and when flying near to earth it would but

dimly flicker. Under the car, and at its sides, were immense reflectors which caught and concentrated the glow of the thousands of small lights surrounding it and illumined the path in darkness.

Lilith and her mother entered their compartment. Halsner pressed his magic button and the car silently shot into the air, gliding through the thick banks of mist, then mounting above a screen of soft clouds, rainbow tinted, beautiful beyond expression, which were rapidly falling under them. Soaring aloft as lightly as a bird on the wing, they would soon be among other peoples, other lands, and in new, strange and fascinating haunts. . . .

But the spirit of adventure in Lilith leads first to the South Pole in quest of the radium diamond. Thence through the vast jungles of Africa and across the Great Sahara Desert into the Holy Land where Lilith fancied that finer urge of the spirit within would find its complementary and reveal to her the definite path of her future activities.

CHAPTER VII

Many days had been spent in restless searching, in flying from one city to another, one point of interest in the wilds to some calmer sphere till one morning, her mind imbued with the intangible consciousness of things unreal, Lilith was sitting with her mother upon the broad piazza of the hotel wondering why it all had come about; just why they were here again in Calcutta on this particular evening. They were homeward bound after several months of delightful traveling across the old world continents, but for some reason quite unknown to both, they had suddenly decided to return to Calcutta for a brief stay.

Lilith sat watching, with a somewhat vague tranquillity, the soft loveliness of the evening shadows—and a cooling breeze made her spirits seem purer, lighter in that lucid air.

“Mother, I have been wondering just why we came back here, but now I think I know. There is someone here whom I need, who is going to give to me my heart’s ambition and bring to me a strange but wonderful happiness. This won-

dering mind of mine will be directed into a channel of fearless undertaking. And that unknown and powerful presence is very near us."

Her mother looked at her anxiously: "Yes, perhaps we did come back here for a purpose and I trust your intuition guides you rightly."

"It will, mother dear, it will," and Lilith's voice seemed to softly blend with the night air, and her eyes looked absently into space.

Suddenly, as if returning from a far off dreamland, she said, "But come, mother dear, let us go in. It is midnight and the late night air may chill you."

As they walked leisurely down the long corridor of the hotel, Lilith caught the echo of soft singing from a distant hall. She stopped, arrested by the unearthly beauty of the music. "Listen, mother, do you hear that? How exquisite are those tones. Let us go in and see who is singing."

The room which they entered was spacious and the only visible light came from above the piano, which stood in a far corner of the room. As Lilith approached, a man of distinguished bearing arose and came forward. It was a handsome and commanding figure that stood before her, tall and erect—a man about middle age. The features were finely and sensitively moulded, the chest broad; the head unusually large with a

broad and noble brow. The face, like that of a seer, beamed with intelligence; the expression was kindly, yet contemplative. The hands were extremely interesting, neither too large nor too small; their touch was vibrant, thrilling with a powerful electric force. It seemed as if the workmanship of ages had been moulded into them.

As Lilith gazed upon that countenance she was electrified, and the effect produced upon her mind was too mystifying ever to be forgotten, or even analyzed. It awakened an indistinct, haunting memory, a reminiscence of those day dreams in which her fancy was so often wont to dwell and in which this same serene face appeared before her. She could not speak but in the gaze and in the divine splendor of the eyes which met her own there was much understanding, tenderness and inspiration.

He was the first to break the silence and in a voice of soothing richness said, "Won't you be seated?"

She moved toward the chair he offered. His gaze still rested steadily upon her, kindly, yet full of intensity. His eyes were of changing color, blue and gray, soft-hued, then brilliant.

At last, words were forming themselves on her lips and in a low voice she said, "You—oh, I have seen you many times before in my mind's

fanciful wanderings." She passed her hand over her eyes as if to clear away an obscuring mist. "I had such a strange experience last night and now as you stand before me it all comes back to my mind so vividly."

"Yes, tell me about it," he replied in an interested tone.

"You and I entered a beautiful forest. We had gone but a short distance when we met a number of little children dressed in white with garlands of gloriously colored flowers entwined among their curls. In their hands were long ropes of the flowers. They were jumping, laughing, singing softly as they tossed their pretty heads in childish abandonment, while the sunbeams danced around them and the wind murmured musically among the tree tops and the tall green grass under their feet nodded in assent to their capricious joymaking. We watched with interest each dainty little figure; then at length we emerged from the fresh wood and found ourselves upon a smooth path, one side lined with magnificent trees, the other a barren plain stretching away into the distance. We walked along slowly, our hearts thrilling with happiness and peace and our souls responding to the quiet beauty of the land in which we were traveling.

"This picture was still a radiant vision when

suddenly in the path before us appeared an aged, broken man in an old cart drawn by a donkey moving slowly and stubbornly. We paused as the quaint party drew up before us. The old man arose from his seat and alighting stood bowing humbly before us and waving his hands in a backward motion, and mumbled something in our ears, the only words audible being, ‘The young man with golden sandals who comes yonder.’ We looked about, puzzled, wondering what he meant and to whom he referred. Climbing onto his seat again, he gave a loud command to his donkey and moved slowly off, leaving us staring in bewilderment. Our happiness was damped now and our minds were perplexed. There had been a sinister meaning in his very movements, in his gutteral utterances. We stood long, looking after him in silence, then you took my hand and we walked on again.

“At length we came to a bend in the road, and at this particular spot giant trees stood on either side, casting the shadows of their foliage upon the ground and making a pleasingly inviting spot. We stopped and sat down upon a fallen tree trunk. Presently around the curve of the road appeared a figure curiously dressed, apparently a very young man, but his shoulders were bent under the heavy load which he was carrying. His shirt was tattered and torn and the

trousers about his bare ankles were badly frayed. Upon his feet were beautiful golden sandals wrought in the purest and finest of gold and of most delicate craftsmanship. His head was bare and the mass of beautiful brown hair lay in a disheveled heap. His face was wondrously young and glorious and his eyes shone with a warm lustre. He stopped quickly upon seeing us and with some difficulty lowered his burden to the ground.

"Over his shoulder hung two tiny bands of gold in thin flat links of about an inch, each one bearing a curiously carved design or emblem. 'Who are you?' we asked.

"'I follow him who goes before—he whom you met a short time ago upon this road.'

"'The man with the donkey and cart?'

"'Yes,' replied the stranger. 'Yonder lies the City. You have not to travel far before you reach its site, but you cannot enter it together. Your companion must enter by the passage on the left,' and turning to me, 'you must enter through the passage on the right. That is all I can say to you now. Adieu, Adieu, Adieu, and peace be with you.'

"We were amazed, for this seemed more strange than our first visitor and we had received no enlightenment from either as to their identity or their destination. We were anxious now to

reach this city, so we hastened on. The road lost itself in the barren plain before us and in the distance we saw an immense mountain, steep, barren, with sides as perpendicular as those of a granite wall. Upon coming nearer we observed on the left a massive rock in which was an opening just large enough for one person to enter. On the right, and in the center of this wall was a gate which would admit but one person. We parted and turning to me, you said, 'We will meet again once we are within the City.' Then we entered as we had been directed.

"Once within the confines of those strange walls my physical self seemed to disappear; to vanish in the mist and I was soaring, oh, so high; feeling as light as a glistening dewdrop ere it is touched by the morning rays of the sun. Then a weird loneliness swept over me. I felt as if I were a lost being on an unknown planet—its sole inhabitant. All about me was an uncanny silence and darkness. Suddenly I began to float onward and upward, striving, struggling to reach the light. All at once I felt the presence of an invisible force bearing me along swiftly, silently. I ascended higher and higher, always in darkness, and a fearful, chilling terror coursed through my veins. I was seeking for some ray of light, when a vague sense of imprisonment

caused me to shudder with fear and I wanted to leap from out the surrounding blackness.

"In another instant I was conscious of a powerful presence near me and like a great curtain the blanket of darkness divided. Above me was bank upon bank of bewitching, feathery clouds. Far below lay a beautiful valley and streams, like tiny silver threads, winding their way in and out over a land of perfect loveliness and among innumerable rows of towering trees. The valley stretched away into the distance without the slightest undulation, and over its entire surface lay a covering of glistening white sand, which under the rays of the sun sparkled and gleamed like precious jewels.

"I stood awed and fascinated with this glory, thrilled with the desire to descend into this valley of wonderment. While wrapt in intense admiration, a voice like a deep musical chord floated to my ears. In another instant your figure stood before me; your princely countenance was filled with a tender light.

"Taking your hand, I asked in a voice that seemed scarcely audible, 'Where am I?'

"'You are upon a lost planet. I am here to guide you. I shall always be protecting and caring for you wherever you may be, but you must now return. You came in darkness and fear but you will return through that Valley of Light and

Beauty which you see below. Goodbye,' and you were gone.

"A flood of golden light illuminated my path. I stretched out my arms in thankfulness. Then I saw your figure slowly disappear from view. Soon I found myself in the Valley, wending my way along the edge of a crystal stream. I felt so free, so happy, so rich, in this land of peace, purity and beauty. Before my eyes stretched the country in an unbroken distance; the trees, the streams, the sun and I were companions and understood."

The stranger kept an intense gaze upon Lilith as she recited this experience and when she had completed her narrative, he went up to her, taking her hand in his own. "Yes, I was your companion always." Then continuing, "You have ambitions to become a writer, have you not?"

Lilith was startled by this sudden question and in a voice betraying her surprise, answered, "Yes, I have, but how did you know?"

"I know every thought, every desire registered within your mind."

Lilith gave a queer little laugh. "That is interesting."

"And do you know the sacrifice, the price demanded of a woman writer?" the stranger continued.

"No"—hesitatingly. "What do you mean?"

"Just this—writing is the very highest plane of creative art. Woman lives in a world apart, a world of her own infinite creation. The higher the rate of consciousness, the nearer the Divine and the greater is the unfoldment of the spirit. Genius cannot exist in a material world; it must create a realm of its own and to accomplish this the vibratory rate is raised far beyond the material plane and, owing to this extreme tension, the psychic self is highly developed at the expense of the physical; the health and nervous system become impaired unless very careful attention is given by one with a thorough knowledge of the nature of the occult laws. To woman it is the forbidden field, for physically she is constructed not to become mother of ideas or invention, but to confine her motherhood to the first plane, that of the propagation of the species, while on the mental plane she becomes the father element. The instant she carries her desire for motherhood on to the mental plane she breaks the great law of inversion.

"She finds, however, the open door for the expression of her creative force upon other planes besides that of the propagation of the species, for on the ideal or second plane, which is creation on the plane of ideas, the sexes are inverted and man is inspired by some woman whose mind vibrates at a corresponding rate with his own, and

he becomes the mother of invention. That which sows the seed of the ideal form is designated the father element; that which conceives the seed, nourishes it and gives it incorporation and birth is designated the mother element. Mounting to the second plane of creation, Ideation—there the thought form, the ideal, is psychically realized and given birth and its final deliverance is an ideate in the form of a symphony, a sculptured group, a book, any piece of creative art. The fact therefore remains that Ideation, the second plane on which creation occurs, is an inversion of the first plane, of generation, in that the original functions of man and woman are reversed. Physically, then, man is constructed so that he can endure a greater tension of the nervous system and it is more natural for him to dwell in the mentally creative field, his mind being fertilized by that of some woman whose own mind is in tune with his. So you can realize where the danger lies for the woman who desires to enter into the creation of a book, a painting—anything of the artistically creative—when she must invert her sex contrary to the laws of nature. But the creative desire is divine and the eye trained by a pure heart to see God in everything, responds only to the wonders of evolution in progressing on from the limited scope of creative power possessed by the vegetable and animal kingdoms

through the elemental human races whose creative powers have been temporarily confined to the propagation of the species, on up to the higher planes of greater achievements in music, painting, sculpture, invention and writing."

Lilith had listened with grave thoughtfulness to this interesting unfoldment of the laws of the higher realms into which she had longed to ascend. She remained silent, however, and deeply meditative.

"And now," said the stranger, looking, it seemed to her, into the very depths of her being, "are you willing, are you anxious to make a sacrifice of the physical self in order to give expression to the creative ego?"

Lilith looked up at him through the soft lustre of her eyes and answered simply but with conviction, "Yes."

"I knew that would be your answer and all that I might say to the contrary would not change your mind. Yet I wanted to be fair and explain to you just what it means to a woman to go into the field of creative writing. It is, nevertheless, a wonderful and beautiful art and you will derive much satisfaction and pleasure and success from it, even though sacrifice and suffering accompany it. The higher the plane of creation upon which we live, the nearer we are to God, for all the glories of His Kingdom are ours

if we but attune our spirit to His through love and sacrifice. Come to me tomorrow and we will begin our work."

Lilith and her mother arose. The stranger bowed graciously. Then Lilith paused, "Your name?"

"They call me Tokalon," the stranger answered gravely.

Lilith repeated his name as if weighing curiously the meaning of it and they silently left the room. Her desire for creative expression was the child of a restless brain. Her imagination was more a spirit of the somber than the sunshine, more of power than capriciousness and she had a penetrating understanding of human emotions.

And who of us from the lowliest to the highest bred of the universe has not some secret creative ambition, some spark within that yearns for the light of existence, be it a child or a book? And is not the propagation of life the first law of creation which God implanted within our souls? And he who creates a world apart from the real nature earth is the true genius of the soul.

CHAPTER VIII

That night as she lay upon her pillow, what thoughts, what images, were playing within the secret chambers of Lilith's mind! A thousand restless yearnings seemed to have found at last a more tranquil abode within her being, but they also had given place to other and newer longings occasioned by her meeting with Tokalon. The opportunity to enter into the realm of creative writing had made her very happy for it seemed at last her restless ambition, and that something for which her active mind had been seeking were to be satisfied. She had no fear of the dangers of the high plane of intensity upon which she would work, for under Tokalon's guidance she felt sure no serious results would be the outcome of her ambition.

But ah! those newer yearnings, what of them? Were they of the heart? Her feelings, like her own nature, were peculiar, strange, complex. She did not feel as do most girls when they sigh over the bitter and sweet of their first love. No; to her Tokalon represented that someone about whom she had woven all her childish dreams,

built all the ideals of her young maidenhood. She was not enamoured of him. Something akin to majestic awe, gratitude, delight, combined with a sincere reverence for that which represents the highest form of human beauty and spirituality, permeated her being. It was as though she had been led to the place where she was to find the one who had been sought by the restless spirit within. Here was a personage to fill her with wondrous love, with joy, with heartaches; for often when her thoughts had sought to shape out her future in sunshine and radiant happiness, always before her vision had come a darkening shadow, chill and foreboding and she had seen nothing but the Deepening Cave beckoning her on, only to be swallowed into its mysterious depths.

What Fate was before her? What meant this strange meditation that had filled so many of her young thoughts? She knew she was happy to-night. In fact she had never known such happiness as that which had thrilled her since leaving Tokalon, and yet—what was there about it which saddened her? Why such alternating moods of awe, sadness and inspiration? She could not explain, yet such was the happiness that Tokalon had inspired in Lilith. And yet she felt this happiness could not really be part of herself; that it was but as a flitting firefly, giving radiance

for an instant to the darkening shadows that ever and anon crept into her brain.

She would see him again on the morrow; that thought comforted her at last into slumber but not the deep sleep of rest and forgetfulness. For her mind, in spite of herself, was vexed by weird, fleeting phantoms, shapeless and deformed.

She awakened that morning as the warm rays of the sun smiled in at her through the parted curtains at the windows. A soft breeze played delicately with a stray lock of hair that fell caressingly over her partially bared bosom. She felt delightfully freshened despite the fact that the night had been one of unquiet sleep, and she arose with alacrity to greet the opening day and to meet the Seer and Teacher.

CHAPTER IX

To be in the presence of the Master Tokalon gave to one a feeling of infinite confidence and inspiration. To Lilith it seemed all the lore of the ages was embodied in this Seer. He was possessed of that creative touch which evoked from every common thing of existence a rare quality of energizing romance and vitality; a mystic touch it seemed where a new life sprang up flowering in the most sterile place and stinging into creative activity the dormant spark within. It was the Divine quality about Tokalon that gave to Lilith the deeper understanding to be found in one's reconciliation to the varying phases of life; life with its contradictory examples.

"You wish to write," he was saying to her. "This writing is the transmutation of passion and emotion to the very highest creative plane, but as I have said before, it is the forbidden field of motherhood for women, an avenue of creation for which woman must pay physically. This creative plane is governed by the law of relaxation and contraction, just as the earth which we

inhabit, in its past epoch slowly contracted and civilization has constantly adjusted itself to this contraction. In this, the era of the earth's expansion, we yield to the onward progression; civilization providing for each new age the necessities for their particular sustenance, the manner of constructing homes, of earning a livelihood. And all goes to prove the great Unfathomable Omnipotent Force back of Creation's plan.

"We ourselves are wonder beings, these bodies of ours. Think of the intricate, delicate, yet mighty mechanism and power which they possess and back of all the organic functioning is the tiny vital spark that glows everlastingly, knowing no beginning nor ending. Nor does this spark first manifest itself in the material body. We are given a psychic birth in another world, and no doubt oftentimes our psychic parents are the inhabitants of another planet. Then comes a rebirth here in a material body, but it is not always that our psychic mother and father become our material parents. After a sojourn on the earth plane, the spirit returns to carry on further its work in another realm and perhaps to reincarnate again and so on with its expression and experience until the Great Final Day when we become as one family.

"Spirit is that part of us which knows neither time nor space, beginning nor ending. Soul is

the vibratory emanations which make and are the records of our existence. The personality or entity of our departed ones is ever surrounding us and by attuning our consciousness to a high degree of intensity and sympathy we are often privileged to see or speak to them."

"But life—what should that really mean to us? How should we make the most of it? What should we really get out of it?" Lilith was asking.

"It depends upon our plane of consciousness. If we can register each sorrow, each adversity, each happiness as an experience, a lesson of the power of the Something Great within this perishable clay and out of it elevate and create, then we are traveling that avenue that leads to the Higher Kingdom, for there are but two paths in life, one is constructive, the other destructive. Through love and suffering one touches the divine and the sufferer is brought nearer the Infinite One. To leave something of ourselves to the world, that is our great mission, the fairest immortality on earth. Indeed if that inherent quality within us which yearns for expression were always given a harmonious, wholesome environment, life would be more constructively satisfying.

"Take for instance the vast multitude of toilers throughout the world whose daily existence is one of mechanical monotony, whose lives are spent

in the dark mines, in the fields, in the factories; in various pursuits in which the smouldering spark is stifled; they rebel at their lot in life and that creative energy not having the opportunity to express itself in channels of constructiveness becomes directed into a maddening current of dissatisfaction and destruction, and the mental faculties become accustomed to a mechanical rhythm which needs no thought power. Harmonize all conditions today and you remove all dissatisfaction and unrest tomorrow."

The illustrious teacher arose and smiled, "But you have a radiant future before you if you only strive to make the best of it. You have the power of fixing into substance, of immortalizing the beings of the Invisible World, for your pen is your golden wand to cheer the way for the many, to give hope to the multitude, to inspire the weary. Make the most of it."

Lilith's voice was scarcely audible as she replied thoughtfully and gravely, "I will, I will."

CHAPTER X

Four people sat in front of the low broad window in the studio of Tokalon, watching an approaching storm. The room was elegant in architectural beauty and contained but little furniture, indeed had more been placed within its walls, the spacious splendor would have been lost. Yet its grandeur was the essence of simplicity, giving a sense of serene calmness and loveliness.

Tokalon was the first to break the silence after a deep, weird echo of thunder had died away. His voice was solemn and low. "Our storms here, coming as they do across the desert, seem to carry in their wake a sinister message. By that I mean there is always some person whose Fate they hold within their moaning," and looking afar off, he added in a thoughtful tone, "I wonder whose Fate it brings tonight?"

"Ah but, Tokalon, I love the storm, yet somehow fear it. It seems part of my very being." It was Demetra's melodious voice ringing out.

"Yes, child, I know," said Tokalon softly.

Lilith and her mother turned in interest toward

the speakers. "That sounds so mysterious, Demetra," laughingly said Lilith.

"Yes, perhaps so," replied Tokalon. Then turning to Demetra, he continued, "No doubt the two ladies here would be interested in hearing your story, Demetra child, and tonight this storm seems to be a most picturesque background."

Demetra's dark, luminous eyes looked up at Tokalon affectionately. Then in a voice strangely her own, she replied: "It seems all so like a haunting panorama of the past, but I will tell the story as my old nurse so often told it to me. It was a night like this when I came into the world —all the elements of the Universe seemed at war, wild, furious, destructive.

"My father was an Englishman by birth, a great statesman and a writer. My mother was a beautiful girl, the last of an old Egyptian family of wealth and culture. They had been married two years when I came as the blossom of their love. Two wondrous years in which their love was the knitting together of three souls. It had been their custom to take long trips along the River Nile when my father did most of his writing. They had fitted up a luxurious flying boat and on one occasion when father and mother were out on a trip a storm came up. The wrath of the elements broke loose, a moaning battle between heaven and earth! Their boat was

forced to leave the air and take to the river. The waters of the Nile were wicked and cruel that night and the boat was buffeted helplessly about at the merciless anger of wind and water. The storm had prevented an early landing at Alexandria and father and mother were forced to spend the night in the boat upon the turbulent river.

"It was during this night of chaos that I came into the world. I had scarcely drawn my first mortal breath when my mother drew her last and so the cruel madness of the storm had snapped asunder the triangle of beautiful love, motherhood and happiness. My father, broken by bitter grief, died six months later. I was alone in the world, but left in the care of an old Egyptian nurse."

Lilith had listened with keen interest. "So that was the beginning of life for this little mysterious Demetra with her ever far-away, haunting eyes," she said tenderly.

The storm without was raging furiously.

"Now Tokalon, tell your part of the story," exclaimed Demetra with childish persuasion.

"Very well, if you will have it so, and since you are soon to leave me it will be well for your new guardian"—indicating Lilith—"to know how you happened to come under my care."

Tokalon turned toward Lilith and her mother.

"Fifteen years ago there was an epidemic of a treacherous fever here in Cairo. I was in India at the time but when I learned of this fatal malaria I hastened here to give what aid I could. I succeeded in saving many lives through my healing and labored unceasingly. In the poorer classes and in the squalid settlements the epidemic took a greater toll of lives, but still there were many I was able to make well again. One day, going among the wealthy class, my attention was called to the case of an old nurse who was quite alone and the only guardian of a young orphan. When I went to her she was beyond all help. I did what I could but death released her from her agony shortly afterward.

"The child under her care was Demetra. She was at the time but two years old. I made investigations and learned of her parentage and that on her eighteenth birthday she was to become a wealthy heiress. I made arrangements to take her into my care until she reached that age; then I was to give her into the protection of one whom I would deem worthy of the trust. She is now in her seventeenth year, and, as I explained to you before you met her, there is no one else to whom I would entrust her future but your mother and yourself. I have learned to love her as one of my own. I have taught her many things pertaining to the higher occult science. I

did it because she so readily understood and because her existence has been so pure, so lofty and so spiritual; so far above the actual grossness of the world."

"And how proud I am of this honor, Tokalon. She shall be as my own sister. Somehow I seem to feel that we have known each other before."

"I feel that too," softly replied Demetra, then continuing, "I shall be sorry to leave thee, Tokalon dear," she said wistfully, "but I am happy to go with my new guardian to the great America, and I wonder," here she paused and with the same far-away expression in her eyes, "and I wonder, Tokalon, what Fate the stars hold for my future?"

The two girls made a charming picture of harmonious and colorful blending. Demetra possessed a rare and elusive beauty. Her eyes and hair were like the deep mystic splendor of the night; her cheeks had the rich olive coloring of the Orient; her mouth was delicately curved, refined. Her hands were exquisite, the fingers, artistically slender and sensitive, had a touch that at once thrilled and soothed. She was a high-spirited, intense soul, full of wild abandon, at one moment sparkling with enthusiasm and joyousness, at another she was gentle, grave and inclined to melancholy.

Lilith completed the contrast by her subdued,

restful temperament, her poise, her keen sense of humor, her depth of feeling, yet she was full of a refreshing gayety and altogether a delightful and irresistibly charming person.

The storm was now subsiding and Demetra stood close to the window deeply absorbed.

"I fear this storm will draw you out into the mysterious night and then you will be gone from me forever," rang out Lilith's voice in melodious laughter.

Demetra murmured softly, "How fascinating, how terrible it is tonight." Then she suddenly turned toward Lilith, "You know when I get to your great America, I shall take up writing. I must finish the work my dear father began. I feel that it is his wish, and since I have met you, there seems to be a greater inspiration and desire to write."

"I shall be very happy to assist and inspire you in your writing, Demetra, and I am sure it will please Tokalon also."

"Yes, it will make me very happy," thoughtfully answered Tokalon.

CHAPTER XI

The hour of the *début* was near at hand. The young violinist's education has been accomplished—but his future, his reception by the exacting public? Alas! that is the shrine at which the artist must tremblingly kneel and receive the verdict of approval or disapproval; that is the moment of anxious fears, of fleeting doubts. But ah! when that moment of suspense is transformed into a veritable realm of triumphant success and approval, then the artist becomes the shrine to which all the world will make a path to do homage.

True to her promise, Lilith had returned to be present at the *début* and with her was Demetra, "Daughter of the Mystic East."

It was a chilling December eve, bitter cold without—one of those nights in which the imagination leads us to believe that a fairy sprite from her icy region has spread o'er the earth a blanket of rainbow crystals, for everywhere,—upon the trees, the buildings,—the frost had become crystallized into a glittering array of fan-

tastic shapes and forms, and the city lay enveloped within the myriad folds of a veil of snow.

And what a stir throughout the city was occasioned by the forthcoming *début* of the young violinist, for was he not one of their very own, born and educated within this historic valley, under the protection of those mountains? Rumors had been afloat many months that he was the future musical genius of America, and since America was the great art center of the world, was it not plausible that upon whatever she placed her stamp of approval the entire world would do likewise?

The concert hall was crowded to capacity; the audience was brilliant, enthusiastic, eagerly expectant. A box near the stage was occupied by Mrs. Vinson, Demetra, Lilith and her mother.

Demetra was gowned in a lovely satin of an orchid shade and she wore a corsage bouquet of deep colored violets and orchids. The coloring of her gown seemed to illumine the rich black hair which clung so smoothly about her head; her dark eyes flashed with intensity; a slight flush upon her cheeks emphasized the more her Oriental beauty, and enhanced the brilliancy that shone in her eyes.

Suddenly silence fell upon the hall; Lesaria was upon the stage! Then a wild burst of applause, warm and friendly, greeted him! He smiled

graciously in acknowledgment, waiting seemingly through an eternity for the prolonged applause to cease, yet grateful for this enthusiastic reception. He presented a slender, youthful figure as he stood before them, the light of genius illuminating his features. His eyes were keenly intense and radiant as he looked over that multitude before him. A slight nervousness was apparent in his movements as he lifted his violin to his chin. But his fingers, unusually slender and sensitive, were upon the strings and the violin in his hands became a thing of life, breathing, pulsating, throbbing.

His first number was over. A storm of applause arose from the audience. Lesaria felt the electric sympathy which emanates from audience to performer and his heart went out to them in gratitude. And now we are listening to the second number. Half-way through, and he suddenly stops; his hands seem paralyzed. A murmur passes throughout the audience. He turns a beseeching glance around the hall; then his eyes at once rest upon the box occupied by his mother, Lilith and Demetra. Instantly he perceives the intense gaze of Demetra resting full upon him. An electric thrill of sympathy, understanding, recognition arouses him! A silent voice seems to whisper "play." He raises his bow, it quivers slightly in his hand, then suddenly a flood of

entrancing music sweeps over him and he pours forth from his violin marvelous strains of music, like the song of angels, penetrating every fibre of the souls of his hearers. Like a flaming torch, its unearthly beauty and sadness holds the people spellbound. His bow is enchanted with the music of Heaven and the sorrow of the world and his audience is eager to catch each magic note.

But Lesaria forgot the multitude before him, the outside world; to him there existed only that one in which Demetra presided as the soul of his violin, as part of himself. The countenance that he had so often seen in his dreaming, was now before him in living reality.

And now a deep silence, reverberant still with the strange, unearthly melody that he had given, pervaded the immense hall. The audience seemed dazed with the glowing beauty of his music which he had appeared to lift, like some mysterious, vanishing burden, from string to string, letting it float out like a wandering cloud captured in the poetic domain of the spheres of music. Suddenly they regained their consciousness; they arose as one and with one voice they shouted his name; they cheered; they called; they applauded. Lesaria had left the stage but was repeatedly recalled. Once more his eyes sought the box from which came his inspiration. He paled, trembled,

for Demetra, like a vanishing mist had swiftly passed from view.

Her whole soul, all her vitality, had gone out to him in that one critical moment of suspense. She had responded to the vibrations from his violin with an electrifying depth of intensity, and sinking quietly and suddenly to the floor had been immediately carried out.

The audience had not seen, they were still wildly cheering for their artist, but Lesaria had seen the vacant seat. He smiled and bowed a gracious acknowledgment, then hurriedly and anxiously again left the stage.

Lilith met him with a reassuring look. "Do not be anxious, she is quite all right now."

His eyes were filled with a silent, wondering inquiry. When he spoke it was in a hushed, intense voice, "Lilith, take me to her, I must clasp the hand of the one who has been the ideal of my fancies, who has given me such inspiration, so much of success tonight; who has shown me a glimpse of that world in which immortal music is created!"

In another moment he was at Demetra's side. How glorious she looked—her face was more entrancing than ever in its pale beauty, with the wealth of black hair falling loosely about each delicate feature, and the dark silken eyelashes curling upon the fair cheeks. Lesaria gently took

one slender hand into his own and in a voice betraying deep emotion murmured, "I am sorry that the strain was so intense, but how can I thank you? You don't know what this has meant to me; not so much the material success I have made tonight, but just seeing you in actual life before me, a living breathing being!"

Then Lesaria caught sight of the bouquet she was wearing. "Your flowers—they are dead,—those beautiful violets and orchids have given of their life to my music, your music tonight."

Demetra smiled tenderly and half-sadly up at him and she spoke as one musing upon memories of the far-off past. "Do you not remember that long, long ago we knew each other, in another realm, and parts of that melody, do you not remember hearing it somewhere?" And then added slowly, "It is Fate that has drawn us together, two souls that have yearned for souls known yet unknown."

"Yes, somehow, I vaguely remember. That melody is the one I have so often longed to create and when I saw you tonight, when my fingers became stiffened upon the strings, your vitality warmed them with parts of that melody which I seemed to have strangely captured. Without you it would not have been given life, never re-created. It is you who have brought the vital spark into my music; you are the soul of my violin and

through you I will yet give to the world the whole of that symphony which tonight came only in a straying melody. See how they have taken it, they are still calling to me; it has electrified them, just that bit of it, and when I give it in its complete creation to the whole universe, every rock, every mountain, every living thing, inanimate and animate, will hear it."

"Ah yes, every living thing, inanimate and animate, will hear it," softly repeated Demetra.

Lilith looked with happiness upon her two young protégés. She took their hands, "Two souls affianced by God, and may you together travel down that long path that leads to the glory of Infinite love and creation."

CHAPTER XII

After his triumphant success, our young virtuoso was much in demand. His music was like exquisite harmonies stealing out of unseen worlds and back again, as if half afraid of the world of reality, yet finding a moment's rare delight ere passing again into silence.

Now came a trip to Australia, for the golden artistry of his music was to be given to the world. Friends known and unknown from far and near had heaped upon him their warmest praise and congratulations. Lesaria was filled with a deep rapture, but it was not alone the great success he had achieved that gave him so much happiness. It was the wonder of his love for Demetra, who seemed to have burst forth from the world of haunting visions into his own world of life, burning brightly as a beacon light whose fires once lit, cannot ever die.

The time for the departure had arrived. He was to travel by aero car; the first part of his journey taking him over the great Arizona Desert. The car and its pilot awaited their master. Lesaria found it difficult to bid goodbye to

Demetra; this great love which had come into his life was such an exquisite, glorious thing that a parting at this time was extremely painful. He folded her in his arms for a final farewell, pressing a fervent kiss upon her lips. "My dear love—across the flaming desert sands, above the restless moan of the ocean wave, I shall be traveling; but oh, the song of your spirit will be my song; the beating of your heart against my own as I hold you here in my arms will be the music I shall play for them!"

"And you," she breathed, "as you are playing for them I shall be here gazing beyond yonder mountain peaks, listening, listening, listening, perhaps catching a delicate strain that may be borne to my ears upon the soft sighing of the evening air. The sensitive vibrations of your violin strings, the electric thrill of your fingers as they touch those strings, will impart to me the strains you are playing, for my spirit will harmonize with your own and my ears will be attuned to the sound of that music in distant lands."

"Yes, yes, you shall hear me and I shall hear you. My beautiful spirit, I love you so—but I must go now. Why there are tears in your eyes, what is the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing—I am just too happy, that is all. They are waiting for you, you must go," she exclaimed between her tears and smiles.

Lesaria clasped her to him in a farewell kiss, then bidding the assembled group goodbye, entered the aero car which was soon soaring aloft upon the wings of the air.

Demetra watched the car disappear into the blue depth of the heavens and still gazing after him she repeated, "Across the flaming desert sands, above the restless moan of the ocean wave," then turning to Lilith, she said with a shudder somewhat of premonition, "the flaming desert sands, they are treacherous, I do not trust them!"

"But he is safe, Demetra, the car is an excellent one and the driver is skilled and reliable, do not have any misgivings over the journey."

"Lilith, you know the great love I have for him and I want him to be the wonderful success over there that he is here. Since the world has heard of his phenomenal playing they are impatient to hear him everywhere; they expect great things of him, and they shall not be disappointed. I know how he will play for them and how that music will haunt their memories, world-sweeping in its pathos, appealing in its depth, soothing in its beauty."

CHAPTER XIII

Out upon the horizon, deftly poised amidst a universe of glistening sun-rays and half obscured by the sapphire blue of the heavens, was a heavy bank of drifting clouds, swiftly approaching, bearing a dark and threatening message in their sinister path. Thousands of feet above the scorching sands of the desert, and in the direct path of those foreboding messengers of wrath, soared the aero car which carried Lesaria Vinson on his journey. Cloud banks of fantastic shape, like yawning caverns or beetling mountains, soon enveloped them, and winds driving at a death-defying speed tugged and pulled, beating mercilessly against the vaporous atmosphere; and at last, as if the anchor that held fast in creation's center had given way to the threatening forces of nature, down, down, down at a swift and helpless speed crashed the car.

A sand storm upon the desert! With what awful horror the human mind contemplates such a storm! Great sand domes were cast up and as quickly torn down by the wind's relentless force. Whistling, moaning, crying across the barren

waste, it sped on its way, carrying before it a wall of blinding sand! Here and there a cactus tree stood alone as if endeavoring to defy the onrushing monster of destruction; now and again a huge snake was seen to writhe and fight and struggle for safety under the downpour of sand. The air was a blackening, burning whirlpool of wind and sand.

Suddenly the heavens seemed to fling open their casement and a moving background of nature enthralled the attention. A transparent glory was radiated; the heavy bank of clouds appeared to have hidden behind some remote curtain of the sky and the sun-rays beat down upon the face of the desert, now lying in smiling tranquillity. In the distance a huge mound could be discerned, rising above the innumerable sand banks deposited in an uneven and broken chain. As an approach was made the visible outline of an aero car could be distinguished, as it lay half concealed. Beneath it a figure was struggling for freedom; a low moan was emitted from the wreckage and slowly and painfully a human form emerged. It was Lesaria Vinson. For an instant he stood erect, apparently dazed, then clasping the arm of his pilot who lay half buried, he endeavored to free him from the burden of the car. Weakened and exhausted, Lesaria's attempts at rescue failed and he sank back with a

low painful cry. The fierce heat of the sun was stifling and scorching. "Demetra," was the one faintly audible word framed upon his parched lips.

Away off in the distance a moving speck appeared, coming nearer and nearer. As it approached it could be recognized as an ostrich carrying a human burden. Tokalon had come to the rescue! His master mind had captured the message of agony as it went up from the minds of those two men as they lay near death in the awful solitude of that awful desert. With his massive strength it was easy for Tokalon to remove the shattered hulk of the aero car and free the body of the pilot pinioned underneath. Placing the two men upon the soft bed of sand, Tokalon, clasping their hands within his own, willed his strength, his life, his vitality, into their beings. A healing touch that vibrated with the essence of the Divine and evoked from the human body all disease, all pain, all suffering. It soothed and invigorated and the dormant spark of life was stung into activity in those two bodies just hovering on the border line. His spirit radiating with a life-giving power emanating from the Supreme Master, Tokalon gave to those two men new life through the wonder touch of his hands.

Let us leave the desert scene for an interval. Our friends are in the keeping of Tokalon and all

is well with them. Another vital experience demands our interest, an experience which Demetra is relating to Lilith in the soft-toned magic of her voice.

"An overwhelming power suddenly took control of me, a force that was irresistible. My will was utterly opposed by another stronger than the unconquerable strength of the ocean wave or the wind's wild destruction. People were all about me, I could feel their presence, they moved around me silently, slowly. Then out of the darkness the shadow of a human form emerged, standing apart and distinct from the light around it. It was heavily draped, the arms were outstretched as if calling me to them. Then from behind this shadowy form appeared another figure, seemingly very near, yet far off. Then I felt the room vibrate delicately; a stream of pale blue light flooded through it and the shadows disappeared and all was darkness again. Suddenly the atmosphere was enveloped in globules and rays of light, many colored—orange, azure, green, fire red—and circles of purple and violet danced hither and thither slowly, then swiftly, the whole blending into a strange, colorful beauty. A sensitive vibration filled the room. The two forms again became visible. The heavily draped figure seemed to be still calling me and I reached out my hands in response but almost

instantly it appeared to blend into that of the figure standing afar off and they faded again in a glory of light.

"Something has happened to Lesaria but I know Tokalon is with him. He has been very near death, but Tokalon knew and he has saved him. Tokalon, the Seer and Teacher, is everywhere and knows all things. He is always on hand to administer his healing touch. Oh, I shall be so glad to see him again for I know he is coming here and the truth of this apparently fantastic tale I have just related will soon be known." Demetra's dark eyes gazed into space, on an unseen object; she was thoughtful and silent.

"Surely it does appear all so strange Demetra, but what could have happened?" inquired Lilith.

At that instant the door opened and filling its space was the figure of Tokalon. Demetra ran forward. "You are here, Tokalon, but Lesaria where is he—what has happened?"

"Do not fear, all is well. He is here, in the next room. He must be kept quiet for a time, however, until he recovers from the shock, and I ask you not to disturb him yet." Tokalon spoke with much tenderness and Demetra, slipping her hand into his, looked up at him in a mute appeal.

"Tell me, Tokalon, what happened to him?"

"Come, come sit down beside me and I will tell you all." The two girls drew closely around him.

"They were caught in a terrific sand storm upon the Arizona desert. Their car must have gotten in the direct path of those trade winds which one encounters in the upper atmosphere and together with the magnetic force of the desert storm, the machine became powerless and crashed to the earth. There was but one way for me to reach the place where they had fallen; but one way to travel that almost impenetrable sandy waste, and that was by my faithful ostrich, which I have used many times upon the great deserts of the East. It sped over those sand domes as if it realized the urgency of its journey, and we were soon by the side of the wrecked car."

"Ah, Tokalon," exclaimed Demetra, "you did that, you saved him, you gave him back the life that was ebbing. Your strength became his strength. I am so grateful. But the pilot, what of him?"

"He is safe too. But now you may go in and speak to Lesaria. You cannot remain long, for he must not be disturbed too much."

Demetra slipped into the room where Lesaria lay. At her entrance he turned and silently held his hand out to her, a radiant smile wreathing his features. She clasped it warmly and placing her lips upon his, she murmured, "My dear, you are with me, you are safe, I am so happy." Then suddenly her eyes rested upon his left hand,

which he was endeavoring to conceal. In that instant she herself seemed to be stricken helpless. Then realizing that she must not let him know her feelings she silently folded her fingers over his hand, raised it to her lips and pressed a kiss upon it and bending over him again said softly, "You will soon be well, Tokalon said so."

Speaking these first words with some effort, Lesaria said, "Who is Tokalon? I do not remember anything except that I seemed to awaken from a stupor and our machine was upon us and I struggled from under it and attempted to drag the pilot out, but I was weak and fell again. I do not remember anything more until out there on that burning sand someone, a man, was sitting beside me, holding my hands. I was in pain, but his touch was soothing, restful, and it seemed as if I were in the presence of a great personage, so comforting, so peaceful was the power of his hands."

"That was Tokalon. When you are well I shall tell you all about him, but not now, you must rest," and she closed his eyelids with her fingers and left the room.

Going to Tokalon, a sob in her throat, which she endeavored to control, Demetra said, "His left hand is crushed. Will he be able to play again? When I looked at it as it lay there so helpless, that hand which has so thrilled the mul-

itudes with its touch upon the violin strings, I was stunned. I wanted to cry out that it was impossible, it could not be true! Tokalon, you will save it, won't you; you will put new life into it?" and her voice was filled with an urgent pleading, throbbing with love and anxiety.

"Do you doubt me, my Demetra child?" Tokalon paused, looking keenly yet sympathetically at her. "Yes, it will be all right soon; he will have complete use of it again."

"Oh, I am so sorry that I might have doubted you, Tokalon, but you will forgive me. It was such a cruel shock to me and I forgot in that moment I saw his hand lying helpless that you were here; that he was under your care. Yes, I know what you can do for him. I have complete faith in you and the Divine Power of your healing touch."

CHAPTER XIV

Dawn was breaking midst the early warbling of birds, the nodding smile of all nature at the beginning of another day. A gladdening ray of sun peeped in at Lilith just as she gave a fitful toss in her sleep and awakened as though she had been suddenly startled by the presence of someone in the room. For an instant she looked around in questioning bewilderment.

At that moment her mother entered. "My dear, you seem disturbed over something, what is it?"

"No mother, I am not disturbed. But you know today I make my trip to the wonderful island where Tokalon has gone. "The Lost Island" it is called, and its mysteries and history will make a fascinating subject upon which to write and I am most anxious to get started on my journey. Tokalon is the only known person who dares to enter within its walls. Yes, it is surrounded by a wall and Tokalon is going to be my guide and from him will I learn many of the secrets of The Lost Island. Oh, but it will be a

thrilling adventure, mother dear; but do not be anxious for me, I will be safe."

"But how will you reach this island?" anxiously inquired her mother.

"I shall travel in my aero car, mother; I am not afraid."

"Yes, you are brave, adventure thrills you, Lilith. That is the spirit of you," thoughtfully replied her mother.

It was somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean—this island on which no being had descended—and for years it had floated steadily, slowly, surely in its watery path. No one was able to tell from whence it came or how long it had been thus in existence. A strange freak of nature indeed!

But there was one person to whom the island was not a mystery. Tokalon, the great and wise teacher, knew of its history and was the only being who dared penetrate the regions lying within the confines of its rugged walls of lava and rock. But he could not tell all its history for he was in secret bound to its still deeper secret.

The aero car in which Lilith traveled glided swiftly through the clouds and below could be seen the dark, deep blue of the sea. She had not been in the air long and yet a distance of hundreds of miles had been covered. Very soon, however, she observed directly below, the black outline of a portion of land resting upon the

water. She knew this was the famous Lost Island. As the aero car slowly descended she saw that entirely around the outer edge of the island was a great stone barrier, weird and rugged, and in many places immense stone spires were projected hundreds of feet into the air. Upon closer observation she saw that on one side there was an opening through four double bronze gates, onto a high terrace. At this spot her car glided gently down and in another moment Tokalon was at her side.

"You are surprised, no doubt, to find yourself unconsciously directed to this strange island and you have arrived in a remarkably short time," remarked Tokalon.

"Yes, when I started I hardly knew the direction in which to pilot my car and then I just seemed to drift to the spot. Oh, but I am so delighted to have this rare opportunity of such an adventure and it is very interesting," exclaimed Lilith.

"I was sure you would be interested in this island for it possesses so many splendid possibilities in regard to your writing," replied Tokalon. "But come with me and we will begin our explorations. First, let me explain—as you will soon discover for yourself—there is not another living being, to my knowledge, within this island, beside ourselves. Human existence here is impossible.

You will find that you cannot remain here longer than twenty-four hours and that length of time is due to the fact that you are under my care, otherwise you would at this instant find yourself being slowly overcome by the surrounding mephitic vapors."

They walked on slowly. Lilith was intensely interested in all the weird, wild wonders of the place and fascinated also by Tokalon's knowledge of the hidden truths of nature. He went on in his conversation.

"The island is of volcanic origin, having been thrown off hundreds of years ago from a very destructive, active volcano. It was formerly a picturesque city and this particular portion of it, was an unusually beautiful cemetery. You will later observe the many marvelous pieces of statuary which once decorated the graves. At length the people were forced to abandon their city as the volcanic eruptions were so frequent and disastrous and so intense that thousands of lives were lost.

After the desertion of their city, the volcano remained quiet for some time. Then one night an earthquake and a volcanic eruption, wild and terrifying, buried the city. That part of it which comprised the cemetery and which lay nearer the crater, by some freak of nature, was severed from the surrounding land and all these hundreds of

years has slowly drifted through strange waters. It is a subterranean sea of fire itself for there are innumerable small volcanoes still active under this lava rock. That wall you see surrounding the island has been formed from the heated strata, which accounts for its irregular and grotesque outline and figures; and the atmosphere is continuously charged with stifling, poisonous vapors. The bronze gates through which you passed were the entrance to the cemetery."

They were now well within the central portion of the island. Everywhere could be seen the ruins of exquisitely carved statues. They passed under a huge arch, partially crumbled, but there still remained some of the carved figures which represented biblical pictures, and the wreathed heads of many angels reposed in the background. There were glimpses of many carved columns of black and white marble winding in rotation. Inside were galleries with priceless, inscribed slabs forming the floor. A little beyond at the entrance to a sepulchre, was another skilled piece of art. A little girl was laying flowers upon the tomb of her father and hovering above, as an angel, was her departed mother, with one hand outstretched in welcome and the other holding a trumpet.

There were many such ruins of glorious beauty upon the island and Lilith was awed by all she beheld. At length they reached a building situ-

ated high upon a terrace overlooking the entire island, which seemed not to have suffered to the extent of many of the others, for only one wall was partially crumbled.

"This," said Tokalon as they approached it, "is my abode upon the island. There are three rooms within it which are fitted up for occupancy. However, it is only on rare occasions that I come here and then I do not remain longer than two days. I come here when I wish to observe some infinite working of nature, some phenomenon of the Universe. Tonight will be particularly beautiful as a shower of meteors, or shooting stars, will make their path through the earth's atmosphere, accompanied by fire balls or meteorites which will descend upon the island. It will be a most brilliant and unusual spectacle and one worth your while."

They entered the building. The rooms were simply furnished and afforded an atmosphere of comfort and serenity from the chaotic ruins of the island.

The descending sun was spreading its rich evening shade over the island, bathing each rugged outline of rock, each frightfully silent marble column, in a soft tender glow. It was not many moments before it flashed its farewell evening caress to the solemn ruins, to the waves of the darkening sea, and left but for an instant its

afterglow declining across the heavens. Then all was darkness; but soon the millions of glittering worlds above smiled down from infinite space and the jeweled firmament was arrayed in all its mystic glory.

Tokalon and Lilith ascended a narrow stairway and reached the top of an observation tower in which were arranged the most minute, intricate devices known to science. Lilith looked round with further wonderment at these achievements of man, marveling still more at the super-human power of Tokalon. Looking out from her position in the tower she could obtain a most intimate view of every spot of the island. Tokalon called her attention to the mechanism of the various instruments and it was with intense awe and interest that she listened to him as he unfolded to her their secrets. Indeed, the history of the Lost Island, its somber desolation and the ruined beauty of what was once a portion of a glorious city, filled her with a solemn, haunting dread and restlessness, mingled with enthusiastic ardor and amazement. She sensed an unknown strangeness in Tokalon and yet her own mood was one of terrible contemplation. A chilling apathy surged through her being. What was this terrible influence around her and why did Tokalon seem so strange to her? Was there a diabolical spirit that

pervaded the island and affected human beings in such a manner?

Tokalon remained quiet, silently studying the fair, perplexed features before him. He as silently took her hand and in a low voice remarked, "It is a wondrous night; see what beautiful depths of color the sky holds and what a brilliant field of twinkling diamonds lie across it. But ah! See quickly! There is a shower of shooting stars, their darting trails of light marking their paths through the atmosphere!"

Lilith, now more calm replied in a tone of deep feeling, "Yes, Tokalon, it is wonderful."

Just then another vivid swarm of meteors encountered the earth's atmosphere, leaving a striking, colorful radiance in their wake. In another instant a violent explosion caused the earth to tremble; a detonating meteorite in its swift brilliant flight buried itself in the earth at the further end of the island. As the great fireball weighing hundreds of tons crashed into the earth, there arose in the air a tremulous mountain of soil from the jaws of the newly made opening, which fell back again with a sullen rumbling groan. The glaring flame of crimson quickly vanished as the meteorite struck the earth and a reflecting glow took its place. The fire stream had illuminated for a brief instant the heavens, the ocean, the island.

Lilith was enchain'd in emotions that were too complex for understanding. "Tokalon," she murmured, "this has been an experience of strange delight, of unutterable joy and knowledge."

"Just a bit of color to weave into your writing," he replied half-thoughtful, and Lilith detected a slight tone of grave meditation as he spoke. "But come," he continued, "we will go and view at closer range this meteorite and the spot in which it fell. That, too, will greatly interest you. Then we shall take the aero car and leave the island."

They had not gone far when they observed a strange and uncanny figure approaching them. It appeared to be half-beast, half-man. Long shaggy hair hung from the head, face, shoulders and arms. It walked in a half-stooping posture. Upon seeing them it became wildly frightened and fell upon the ground. Tokalon gently took the shoulders and raised the figure. It mumbled incoherently and gesticulated in a fantastic manner. Tokalon looked steadily into the face. Underneath the tangled mass of hair could be discerned the fine splendid features of a man. Tokalon's eyes looked long, deeply and sympathetically into the eyes of the figure before him. Under the spell of his gaze, the stooped shoulders began to straighten, the eyes lost their wild ex-

pression. Tokalon knew he had mastered the savage instinct and that the real man was beginning to unfold before him. It was now the opportune time to speak.

"Who are you and how came you here? No living being is known to exist upon this strange and treacherous island."

The figure seemed a little startled and drew back.

"Be not afraid, I am your friend, and I want you to tell me about yourself."

The man appeared to realize a human voice was speaking and that he was looking upon a human being. Under the power of Tokalon's personality, understanding came to him.

In a voice strained and somewhat muffled, he spoke. "I remember now—it all comes back to my mind quite vividly. It was years ago, I cannot recollect how many. It was a brilliant night and a gay party—she was exquisitely beautiful and I was madly in love with her. So was he, and I was jealous, insanely so. He was dancing with her and as he held her in his arms and she smiled up at him with eyes filled with the love for which my soul was crying it struck my heart into a frenzy of mad jealousy. I challenged him to a duel. She and my sister pleaded with me not to resort to such drastic means but I was determined.

"I left them both weeping and pleading in vain and he and I went into the woods, just a short distance beyond. I looked back and saw the brilliant lights in the house and through the gardens and the picture of her lovely face was before me, tear-stained and sad, but I was resolute. Soon the shadow of the woods covered us and he and I fought long, unceasingly. At last we both fell exhausted and wounded. I do not remember what happened immediately after we fell. All I recall is that sometime later we were together in the ruins of yonder building—he and I.

"For unknown years we have existed here. I do not know when or how we arrived upon this island. Our bodies are unkempt but our hearts have slowly softened toward each other as the dreary days have passed; yet we have spoken no word, still we have understood. That explosion just now roused us and I came out to see what it was."

Then with a haunting far-away expression he slowly continued, "Your face, it looks strangely familiar too."

Tokalon was grave. "Yes, I too remember this incident which you have related. I was one of the members of the party on that fatal night. A number of us went out into the woods to look for you but our search was in vain. We expected to find you either dead or alive, but it was as

though the earth had mysteriously swallowed you and we returned empty-handed."

The stranger turned pale, reeled. "Tell me of her," he asked hoarsely. "Is she still living? And what of my sister?"

"Your sister and the girl still live," replied Tokalon. "They are in a far-away country. They have searched far and wide for both of you. The girl has grown sad, quiet, and never yet has she revealed the secret buried within her heart as to which one of you she really loved. Perhaps it is best that she should carry it concealed into her grave for it is a sacred treasure of her soul and she is noble, pure and beautiful."

The stranger fell upon his knees before Tokalon and clasped his hands. His voice was broken as he whispered, "Thank you, thank you. I loved her so much and it comforts me to get word of her, but I pray you do not tell her or my sister that you found me here. Oh, I love her! I love her! I love her!" and he sank upon the ground in a final sleep of rest and peace, his soul living in the realm of true and Divine love.

Tokalon tenderly lifted the lifeless body and made his way toward the strange abode of the two men. Upon reaching it he and Lilith descended into a deep passage under the walls of the building and there, lying upon a roughly made bed of dry grass, was the still form of the

man's companion. Underneath the long mass of hair about his face was the light of tranquil peace, of love and forgiveness. Death had but recently folded him into its arms.

Tokalon placed their bodies side by side, and Lilith took from her shoulders a long silken mantle of white, covering the bodies as they lay together in their last sleep of forgetfulness and forgiveness. Tokalon knelt for an instant beside the still forms, his voice quivering slightly as he offered up a prayer.

Then rising he said, "I knew them well. It was a strange mystery how they disappeared from the world that night and now the mystery of how they happened to be on this island is even more strange. Alas, it is but another of the freaks and tragedies of the island, and Death closes the final chapter and leaves us baffled and bewildered. They were both desperately in love with the same girl, as you heard him tell his story. Her life, too, has been broken by the tragedy of their mysterious disappearance and she has buried her secret with the memories of the past and no one knows which truly held the love of her heart."

Lilith and Tokalon passed out from the presence of the Dead and wended their way toward the spot where the meteorite fell. They found it buried deeply in the ground, and all around were broken bits of ancient relics, of curious stones

and images with here and there a ghastly skeleton or numerous bones thrown up from the yawning graves of the buried dead. They went over the destructive scene of the heavenly phenomenon carefully examining the strange crevices within this ponderous mass of mineral substance, gathering up specimens and making observations.

With the approach of the midnight hour, the aero car with its two occupants, was hundreds of miles away from this Lost Island of unfathomable wonder.

CHAPTER XV

"We never know what mysterious shadows are lurking near, to gather around us in a future doom." A perceptible pause—then Tokalon continued. "My young pupil, you needed me because that part of your creative mind which had not yet flowered, was seeking fertilization and out in the great Universe rang the silent call which brought you ultimately to me."

Lilith was silent for a moment. "Yes, Tokalon I knew I would find you some day, it was a knowledge that came to me in early childhood; a sort of throbbing message that urged me to seek you out and although I did not know how or when or where that meeting would take place, I knew I would be guided and that we would both understand. I have sought initiation into your own high realms—those realms replete with the lore of all understanding and where glows the Divine Intelligence of mankind."

"Yes, but it is a fearful price one must pay, my young pupil—a price for which the body is scarcely able to compensate. It means a rate of intensity sufficient to disembody the soul. A few

return to tell of their experiences; some are unable to get back upon the threshold of life; others are so overwrought by their fearful experience that the reason becomes dethroned and a fearful barrenness takes possession of the mind.

"Not yet deeming you fearless enough to enter the final stage of initiation, I have invoked to your dreams the fairest of the inhabitants of these higher realms, and in your mind's fancy has been woven the most sensitive of creations, the most delightful of God's creatures. To enter these majestic spheres you must transcend in spirit all the universe, taking your flight beyond the clouds and with the eyes of your soul soaring to sublime heights, look upon that perfect beauty, the beauty that inflicts upon the enraptured spirit an ineffable wound of love the wonder and majesty of which no human language can describe. Be not too anxious, dear pupil, to reach those heights, for it is an intensity that the flesh is quite incapable of attaining without oftentimes terrible results."

"There have been those rare moments, Tokalon, when my eyes have rested upon scenes of enchantment and glory. Fairest visions have been unfolded before my yearning gaze and it seemed but a natural thing for me to feel myself borne upward and onward in a never-ending flight. I have entered regions where palaces and

people, flowers and trees, seemed to be created of the drifting clouds, the glittering gold dust of the stars. I have conversed with those inhabitants but never have I been allowed to linger among them for I belonged to the earth and to the earth I must descend again. But there is one experience that presents itself to my mind quite vividly.

"It is that of a most unique flight taken among the planets. A mysterious aero car was winging its way amidst the darkness, that darkness encountered when one has gone beyond the path of the sun's light. The pilot and his car had passed beyond the power of the earth's gravitation and penetrated that sea of awful blackness and death-defying silence, a peculiar change had come over him in the space of a few moments. He and his car had diminished remarkably in weight. As he spoke to me his voice was strangely audible in that uncanny stillness."

"My great desire is to reach Saturn. Psychically I have made the flight but it is in the interest of science that I am attempting to pilot this aero car and take my physical body with me onto that planet, returning in the same manner that I made the ascent and carrying back to the people on earth, tangible proof and evidence of Saturn's inhabitants. But there is the magnetic pull of other planets encountered on the way

which must be resisted. We are now being drawn toward Mercury which is more strongly negative than the other planets because of its near relation to the earth. If we become engulfed in its wildly speedy path our celestial tour is at an end for Mercury's orbit will have claimed our mundane being.””

“Such a sickening sense of isolation as creeps over one hurtled along in that dark unfurrowed space! We just escaped, by some swift miracle, Mercury's magnetic power. Our supernal journey continued on through the cosmic depths and next we encountered Mars, but we had no fear there, for Mars was too positive a force to detain us. Jupiter might have drawn us into the orbit but again a miracle saved us and we seemed destined to reach Saturn without the anticipated mishaps. The Hand of God had controlled and guided the aero car and as we swept on through space we realized the insignificance of our place in the spectacle of the Universe and how majestic and awe-inspiring is the might of the Great First Cause, the Creator of the Cosmos! We were fast approaching Saturn. The pull was most forceful. Then the mysterious car and the still more mysterious pilot were suddenly hurtled into a whirling mass of nebulæ and helplessly enveloped in the overpowering path of Saturn's emanations. I did not see him again, and alas! he

could not bring back to earth his physical body and the material of his celestial journey, for he was lost on Saturn!"

Tokalon had listened thoughtfully to Lilith's story and when he spoke it was in almost solemn tones. "A very remarkable and interesting experience, thrilling and romantic to the extreme."

Lilith made no answer. In her silence she seemed to be endeavoring to solve the mystery of the lost pilot and his aero car.

Then a sympathetic murmur escaped her lips, "Yes, it was both romantic and tragic and out of it I will create a beautiful story, the story of my lost pilot."

"But," continued Tokalon, "The day is not far hence when we can and will communicate with the different planets. When man will be freed from the tyranny of time and space and be enabled to fly aloft in a machine built especially to combat the trying forces encountered in the great space above. Also we will have an apparatus so delicate, so sensitive, as to register the thought vibrations of the inhabitants of these other planets and in that manner can converse with them."

CHAPTER XVI

What mysteries were embedded within the impenetrable confines of the bowels of the earth? Who had dared to believe what wonders might be sheltered thousands of miles under the earth's crust?

Tokalon had dared to believe, had investigated and had discovered. At the most magnetic spot of the universe, the Magnetic North Pole, Tokalon had directed his investigation. He found there electricity sufficient to drill an immense tunnel into the earth. This power was utilized and a miraculous piece of constructive work begun. After delving some hundred miles, the law of gravitation interfered. But at this point, Tokalon, with his wonderful understanding of electricity, nullified the magnetic power of gravity and through this tunnel gigantic volumes of earth were belched up from the jaws of an encountered stratum of fine burning sand. Meeting with no resistance, this continual precipitous mountain of sand, cast up at a height of five hundred miles or more, was slowly and steadily wearing a chasm into the underground walls, from which it was

escaping, until at last it broke through the surface. The sand shot upward in a never-ending, untiring stream, mysteriously disappearing, having gone through the process of dematerialization, in some unaccountable manner. Tokalon, at this time, released his control of the law of gravity, and into this opening the ice floes began disappearing and crashing down this darkened passageway until they reached a spot below the stratum of burning sand where they formed a phenomenal subterranean lake of boiling water.

Let us stop for an instant upon the brink of this lake. Its waters appear of a crystalline beauty. When one gazes into its depths, however, it takes on sudden strange color effects, that are weird, almost grotesque. Now it makes a rapid change to a reddish purple hue, curiously illumined with a yellow glow, then turns to a vivid green. As an immense glacier is swept into this seething body of hot water, a unique rainbow-hued spectacle greets our eyes. Immediately following, the delicate transparency of the lake is again outlined by the surrounding blue blackness of the dense atmosphere, which brings into a strange relief the uncanny beauty of the lake.

Its waters are intensely agitated and swirl and seethe and moan, as one after the other of these ice floes finds its wary way into this rebellious turmoil of heat and water.

The powerful current of electricity is projected at a still greater distance. Suddenly there is a shock, a throbbing and trembling of the earth. An electric strata has been struck at the spot where the law of gravity ceases, this lake being the dividing line between the positive and negative currents of electric force. Two thousand miles inside the earth and here is electricity of such unusual power that a living race of people, original, unique, make their homes in this subterranean realm. But we are to know more of them later and we now return to the tunnel.

Its construction is such that it can be used for extensive underground travel to all parts of the globe. The east, west, south and north are connected by underground stations and an aerosubmarine car has been created which can be used likewise for traveling in the air and inside this tunnel, and its speed and lightness can be compared only with that of the bird.

Again Tokalon has been the master of mysteries. A builder and creator of rare power, he has opened up to mankind a simpler, more rapid and efficient method of reaching various parts of the earth in a remarkably short period of time.

CHAPTER XVII

It was midnight; the sky was a deepening blue, so brilliant that one thought of it as an uncut, glittering sapphire poised in space. There was a glistening array of stars in this sapphire heaven that fired the imagination with incomprehensible pictures and visions.

Suddenly out of the silent space there shot into the air a car of bright golden hue. Upward it sped in its mysterious path, swiftly and silently. And now accompanying this mysterious car, we will bid farewell to the earth and ascend into the ethereal realms with the car and its passenger. Both are intensely interesting, so settle yourself at ease and without fear, while we travel upward at the rate of thirty thousand feet per minute.

Soon we are in an utter void of jet blackness, relieved by dazzling high lights and weird shadows. Our companion is silent, thoughtful as he rests one hand upon that interesting lever that controls his aero car and deftly guides us along this black interstellar path. At his left hand is a tiny phial which contains a colorless fluid. Intermittently it opens and closes, and immediately

after we feel a cooling exhilarating sensation pass over us. This precious phial contains liquid air which supplies us with oxygen.

This aero car is operated by radium energy and liquid air, each in itself powerful enough to carry the car to unlimited distances above the earth. But what of this strange journey we are taking in the celestial regions? We have ascended to a point where we are beyond the magnetic path of the earth's rotation. Our car remains stationary and the earth keeps on in her journey.

All at once we begin our descent. The car gives a sudden circling motion as if being drawn down headlong by an intangible power which it cannot resist. A great suction or electric current seems to be drawing it nearer and nearer its magnet. As we approach the spot to which we are being involuntarily drawn, a great swirling volume of water is disappearing in maddening torrents down, deep down into a yawning chasm, inside the earth. We have been drawn to the magnetic North Pole and are at the mouth of the strange tunnel. Without warning we are caught in the treacherous vortex of water, but over our aerosubmarine car a waterproof hood is mechanically drawn.

Our companion is Tokalon and upon his finger he wears a ring containing a curiously colored stone. Upon first glance it looks like a dull, life-

less blue, but as our gaze rests steadily upon it we see its luster become brighter, rich and dazzling. On the surface of the stone is a dark spot so small as to be barely visible. Tokalon touches it and a brilliant light radiates the darkness. It is an electric stone and Tokalon is a human magnet with the power to draw to him and give out electricity in various ways. He has cultivated it within his own sensitive being to such an extent that his slightest touch vibrates and thrills with a potent electric force.

The rushing, throbbing motion of the car has ceased. The waterproof cover silently falls from about it and we step out into the darkness but in an instant we are enveloped in a dazzling flood of light. Amazement overcomes us and Tokalon explains that we are two thousand miles inside the earth, within the famous electric strata where we are to meet and know the people who are the inhabitants of this underground world.

A study of their temperaments and physical characteristics might lead one to believe they are the descendants of a lost race of the Egyptians, or mayhap a new-born race bearing a resemblance to those early people.

They are of medium stature, dark-skinned, with black hair and eyes, straight plain features, and a highly cultured manner.

When Tokalon had first made his discovery of

these people their method of living was somewhat crude. They had not fully utilized the electric resources surrounding them and their city had made no superior advancement. He soon learned that what they needed was the direction of someone who could understand their peculiar temperament and they were quick to adapt themselves to a mode of living that was progressive. They were strangely psychic and superstitious yet most tolerant toward anyone in whom they placed their faith.

There was one, Kasaan by name, a dominant character whom they looked upon with a degree of worship for he represented to them, in their peculiar superstition, the only religion they knew and they were easily swayed by his power over them.

There was a mystery about them in another way—they seemed to hold the secret of eternal life, for age did not come upon them. The fresh beauty of youth radiated from every person dwelling within the Electric City. What was this “Fountain of Eternal Life” that permeated the atmosphere of this interior chamber of the earth? None could tell.

CHAPTER XVIII

Tokalon had sought the young violinist and arranged for a recital in the Electric City. His unique aerosubmarine car, equipped to fly through the air and to descend with equal ease and facility into a rushing torrent of water and glide smoothly along was surely as curious and strange as the journey on which it went.

The party of six, Mrs. Vinson and her son, Lilith and her mother, Demetra and Tokalon, were soon settled comfortably within the car's cosy interior. They were expectant, eager for this strange journey and still more strange city. Silently and swiftly the car shot into the air as the hand of Tokalon deftly touched the lever.

It was but a few short hours and they were in the Northern regions traveling amidst ice-laden clouds. With a metallic ring they swept over the crusted snow. The sun rose through this mist, revealing a parhelion of prismatic colors and a crevasse of rapidly changing form and brilliancy as the sun ascended.

We travel on and the desperation, the despondency, the mystery, of the unknown impenetrable

darkness, surrounds us. Maddening storms—hellish, destructive—with their icy vapors sweep over us. We can see only a hazy, violet hue of the sinking sun on the horizon for now we are traveling above floating fields of ice. The dense vapor and darkness which have hung about us is breaking and a fascinating scene of gorgeous color unfolds before our view. The midnight sun in all its weird, hypnotic beauty has cast its phantom rays over this intensely white world of ice. The Northern sky bursts into a flood of coloring. The firey shades of red and yellow deepen into a more somber depth of warm purple and violet, outlining the rugged surface of ice blocks in a delicate flesh tint, deepening at various angles into an intense blue. The shadowed surfaces and fissures display mixed hues of orange and green and momentarily a weird blue-black cheerless tone tenderly caresses a fantastic ice tower. As we slowly circle above nature's moving canvas of luminous, wild color tones, we are enthralled and our hearts and souls respond with awe to this majestic scene. Suddenly we observe a great ice floe moving rapidly away and in another instant we are terrified as with a thunderous roar it disappears from view. Below us is a yawning chasm and before we realize what has happened, one after another of these ice floes as mysteriously disappears. We have not time to conjecture

further, however, for we feel ourselves being drawn down by this unknown power. Instantly and silently the waterproof hood is drawn over the car and the next moment we are being hurled along a rumbling roaring passageway. The top of the phial containing the liquid air opens and the colorless fluid fills our lungs with oxygen.

The car stops! Our strange journey is ended! The covering falls away; we step out upon a street radiating with light brighter than that of the sun. We behold this labyrinth, the Electric City, in all its hypnotic glory!

The city was laid out with exquisite beauty. A brilliantly lighted boulevard was outlined on either side by magnificent buildings of blue stone. The streets were an iridescent glow of light which shone with a brightness outrivalling the sun's rays. Millions of varied colored lights gleamed in scintillating glory throughout the city. This unusual method of lighting was the result of the deft touch and skill of Tokalon. The electric lights were generated by two positive currents meeting at controlling stations, so directed and focused as to cause electrons to rotate with sufficient speed to produce light, the color of which was controlled at the focusing stations by increasing the electric force and increasing or decreasing the wave length.

In the center of the city loomed a tower of

glistening beauty. It was built of marble blocks brilliant blue in color, and on the very topmost spire a halo of wondrously blending lights outlined the tower in a bewildering glory and gave to it an imposing and uncanny grandeur.

Let us go into this tower of mystifying charm. Two heavily plated glass doors bearing the legendary insignia and fellowship of Tokalon open into a spacious hall, majestic and noble in its strange atmosphere. In the center of the hall, bathed in a glory of light, stands a marble statue of a beautiful maiden. The slim graceful figure stands erect in an attitude of freedom and progression. One slender arm is poised above her head and in this hand she holds a transparent sphere representing the Universe. On one side is the earth, and on the other, the Sun, Moon and planets—Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Alpha Centauri—with a line of communication and transportation by electricity leading to the earth. In the other hand, extended outward, she holds a glass ball of various, ever-changing colors. In each changeful color can be discerned a stage of man's progression and finally the electrical stage which is represented by the ultra-violet tone.

At one end of the hall a door opens into the apartment of Tokalon. It is a large room and the delicate glow of light lends charm, and a

soothing fragrance pervades the atmosphere. At one side a faint bluish vapor is rising steadily and gracefully into the air from out a tall narrow lamp of finely carved ivory. In the center is a massive cabinet of jet black ivory, the image of an ancient Hindoo god. Its somber outline is the more accentuated by the blue-and-white walls of the room. But there it stands—a great immovable figure—uncanny in its fearless watch. This dark cabinet figure holds many strange and secret chemicals, all of which are the invaluable treasures of Tokalon; treasures representing years of untold scientific experimenting and research.

The other furnishings of the room are simple, a desk and four chairs, a table or two and a handsome bookcase.

We now pass into the art gallery. It is an expansive and imposing hall and from the ceiling hangs a shining chandelier unique in design and lighting effect. The glow it spreads over the room is many toned; fervent golden, delicate saffron, richest scarlet, tender amethyst and a brilliant purple. The effect it gives upon the various paintings and sculptured forms is uncanny in its subtle, silent, changing radiance.

“That,” exclaimed Tokalon, “is a combination of electric stones made into this chandelier, for the purpose of giving the various lighting effects

to the pieces of art displayed here. The human electricity absorbed from the artists themselves, into these paintings and figures, gives the stones life, radiance and warmth. At the time of my discovery of these strange people I found them all endowed with a special talent which was more or less latent and seemed to have been produced by their environment.

"Indeed these people had created this city, but I saw greater possibilities for them. They were not making the most of the wonderful electric force by which they were surrounded. I went among them, studying their temperaments, and found that each one was an artist, individually creative. They needed someone to teach and direct them in constructive thinking and building.

"There was among them, one who had held the master hand. He was a dominant character; a highly developed psychic, intellectual, ambitious, clever; but with a strange dual personality. He was a worshipper of all that was pure and beautiful, and also of all that was evil and cruel and wicked. He exerted a peculiar, hypnotic influence over his people and they in their superstition, feared and reverenced him at one and the same time. In his shrewd mind he was coldly fiendish and revengeful, yet that inexplicable dual personality of his would radiate a compelling

power, a subtle wit, a tender sympathy, a deep kindness toward all.

"When I came here he began to fear me and gradually his influence upon the people vanished. He lost interest in everything and oftentimes appeared like a hunted animal looking for its lair of safety. But one bond has remained unbroken; it is his love for Layna Nalon, a beautiful girl who mysteriously entered his life, and that love has greatly increased through his sacrifice in giving up his position as head of the people here. He is different from the other inhabitants of this place and I often wondered if he were not of another people than they and by some strange fate came among them here.

"One day he made a strange and unique appeal to me to become their teacher and leader, saying my influence was better for them than his own and that he wished to leave this place for good. I complied with his request and took his place. The response from the people was instantaneous and sympathetic.

"First, I gave them music. The singing has brought them together in a human bond of love and poise and satisfactory achievement. Every individual is now a creator in his own sphere. We make the most rare and delicate laces, fabrics and musical instruments. Our artists have experimented and discovered pigments of richest

hue and the paintings are full of lasting warmth, beauty, tone and color; never losing their first fresh lustre. A hitherto unknown marble has been discovered from which our sculptors chisel into shape their wonderful figures of art.

"But there is in our city a thing of rare wonder and beauty. We call it the 'Cave of Musical Diamonds.' Come with me and you shall see its splendor."

We were now upon the threshold of a radiant, bewildering scene. The Cave in all its enchantment surrounded us. But such exquisite music—what was it? The echo of it enveloped us. The notes seemed to be floating from the lightest touch of finely attuned stringed instruments. We entered yet deeper into the mystery of the Cave, Tokalon still our guide. Before us was a flashing array of blue and yellow stones.

"Those are stalactites from the rocks. Their composition is that of the diamond and produces a vibratory rate of very high pitch, giving a quality of music so potent that it seems to speak to the soul of the hearer, as a voice calling from another world. In the production of this music the discovery of the relationship between light and sound has been made!" exclaimed Tokalon.

Full scope was given the imagination in this "Diamond Cave Music Hall." All around us, everywhere, the intermittent echo of a melody in

all its intoxicating beauty was wafted to our ears. The Cave was aglow with lights from overhead, which sparkled like the stars of the heavens on a bright clear night. A little beyond was the auditorium where the music festivals were held and where our violinist is to give his concert.

As we moved toward this building a man of singular and rather unprepossessing appearance approached. His features were drawn and sullen; a mass of straight, black hair lay close to his head; his eyes were narrow, deeply black, with an expression evasive, cynical, penetrating, and yet in them flashed a glowing kindness and beauty. His hands were long, thin and fascinatingly ugly. He possessed a peculiar dignified poise. At the sight of Tokalon a slight smile flitted across his face.

Tokalon took his hand. "This is Kasaan, of whom I have been telling you; once the master of his people here but for some reason known purely to himself, he has decreed to relinquish that honor."

"In respect to a more worthy personage, I assure you," added Kasaan, bowing almost humbly before Tokalon.

Kasaan was introduced to Demetra and immediately became absorbed in her personality, murmuring quite inaudibly, "most fascinating, exquisitely beautiful."

Demetra shot a clear, cold glance at him but he appeared not to notice and under the influence of her radiant beauty and personality one fancied he became transformed for that instant into his higher self. We seemed to catch a glimpse of the finer man.

Kasaan slowly left the auditorium and, for the first time since Tokalon had entered the Electric City, he sought the crevice in the rock where he was accustomed to commune with his inner self. Here he was alone, shut out from both the inner and outer worlds, yet he could seem to hear and know them both. Faint rumblings of the inner earth disturbances or the electrical disturbances among the clouds tormented his conscience, or was it the volcano within himself surging for an outlet? Who can tell? For at such times of great stress one is only conscious of consciousness.

So Kasaan, on fire with a new love, found himself writhing with emotions beyond his control. How could he relinquish the wonderful protective love he had for Layna Nalon to accept the great stimulative love he had found in the new Demetra? The former, with her tenderness, had reduced him to his present secondary position under the supreme control of Tokalon, while Demetra inspired him to create again as he had before meeting Layna Nalon.

So through a long, sleepless night Kasaan suffered the tortures of Hell. His arteries and veins pulsated as though filled with red hot lead, his eyes bulged from their sockets and his dilated pupils marked the early stages of insanity. His nature was one that knew the two extremes of suffering and happiness.

The morning brought little change, and it was still left for Fate to make the decision for him.

CHAPTER XIX

Layna Nalon had been rather a mystery on that long ago day when she first came into the life of Kasaan. Somehow she seemed so different from the other inhabitants of the Electric City. From some unknown and obscure abode in that enchanted realm, she had emerged to take her place in his life. He only knew that they had met and loved; how or when or where did not matter.

A creature of physical perfection, a contradiction within herself, she was the idol of his heart. Dazzling in her dark beauty, tantalizing in her indescribable reserve and aloofness, every movement was one of perfect grace, bearing the loftiness of a queen. Her personality was irresistible; her moods had all the light and shade of her nature. Gentle and soothing she was at times, imperious and haughty at another moment; then a soft pleading was betrayed in her tones and glances to which one ultimately succumbed. Her eyes held a warmth of love; but there was an impenetrable coldness, an unkindliness about her mouth and chin that was almost cruel. The texture of her skin was as delicate as the wings of a

butterfly. Her hands, perfect in their beauty, had a clasp of decision as unyielding as her nature.

To look upon her was Heaven; to love her was Hell. Her glowing charm, her enthusiasm, her fiery temperament stimulated to great achievement, but her moods of irritability, calm indifference and lack of sympathy made one despise while longing to love her. Kasaan loved her madly, and she returned his love with all the unreasoning passion of her complex nature. Her love was a fire that consumed yet stubbornly smoldered under a mantle of reserve, often to flame up in destructiveness at some unexpected moment.

She was a sculptress of much ability, giving to many of the cold figures she created, such a depth of feeling and intensity that they seemed warm with pulsating life.

Layna was at work in her studio when Kasaan entered. He walked up to her, looked at the cold marble she was chiseling.

"It is very beautiful," he said, "but there is something lacking."

She looked at him a little puzzled. "What is it?" she asked quietly.

He looked thoughtfully for a long time at the half-finished figure. "I do not know," he replied slowly and in a low voice. "Perhaps it is only

my imagination after all, for today is one of those days when all beauty is harsh and lifeless, when the very atmosphere is charged with a weariness that depresses, when all music is but a rumbling clangling noise, when everything is lifeless and uninteresting; even love is dull and annoying. The whole world seems upside down—the universe but a hectic, chaotic mass of atoms."

Bewildered by this sudden outburst, Layna said nothing, but gazed silently as if trying to penetrate the unknown space. Then as if speaking to someone in a distant land, she said,

"Yes, you are tired, I have seen that for a long time—ever since that Egyptian girl, Demetra came here, and—" she paused,—"I am going away, Kasaan. I am going away from this underground abode and out into the light of another world. You are tired of me and perhaps—" she stopped as if weighing her next words, "perhaps I too am tired of you."

At this remark, Kasaan started a little, then suddenly clasping the fingers that held the chisel and looking into her face, he said, "Layna, do you mean that? Surely you are not serious?"

A little cold smile played about the corners of her mouth and she made no answer.

He loosened her hand from his own, his voice was husky as he spoke, "You look at me like that, with that smile upon your lips and I do not know

what to believe. Your eyes say one thing, your lips another. You little devil, you torture my very soul by the cold and fire that throbs through your veins."

"Yes," she cried impulsively, "I am tired too—my very soul is sick. The very best that is in me I have endeavored to put into this work, yours and mine, yet I am utterly miserable. Why? Because it is not the finer part of my nature that you love. Ah yes! You have held me in your arms and sworn your love, but it is only the physical beauty, only the worship of my body. I have wanted you to love that within me which has tried to arouse in you the expression of your own creative powers. To look upon you one sees ugliness of form and feature; your hands are hideous in their ugliness. But to me this has meant nothing for I have loved the finer things of your inner self, which others cannot see or understand. Ah, we have both failed miserably.

"Yes, I have grown tired, my whole being has revolted. There is nothing in life that is good and beautiful to me now. I deny everything! The instincts of cruelty, hatred and revenge which you have reminded me that I possess, shall now have full sway. My body with its physical beauty is a curse to me!"

"That piece of marble—look at that half-finished figure, cold and lifeless. Its body is not

beautiful—you said something was lacking. It is true, for its creation has come from cruelty and hatred; it is ugly because you have made it so. See how its unfinished lines mock and jeer! Kasaan all the destructive forces within me are unleashed and nothing but disaster and failure lies ahead of me—and ahead of you too! It is love misused and misdirected, love gone mad! I hate you Kasaan, I hate you!" she cried, and with one strong stroke of the chisel she shattered the figure upon which she had been working.

Kasaan too amazed, too stunned to anticipate this rash move, stood a helpless spectator. Then he clutched both her hands, and looking intently at her, exclaimed, "Layna, you have gone mad, mad with jealousy, hatred and suspicion. The things you have said are untrue. I have loved you more than any other mortal. Day and night, every moment, your presence is near me. Within my heart there is a shrine of your lovely face, at which I worship. You cannot, must not, go away and leave me like this. Let us go out into the world together; go through life constructing things of beauty and giving happiness to others."

"No, no, it is too late now." Layna's tone betrayed the bitterness of her pent-up passion. "Goodbye," and she held out her hand, "try to think the very best that you can of me. It is better that I leave you at this time."

"But, Layna, I do love you, this is madness. Think what it means to us both," Kasaan cried passionately.

She stood immovable, and looked at him coldly, calmly, uttering no word. Then that smile so cruelly tantalizing played for an instant about the curves of her mouth.

"My God! That smile drives me to madness!" he shrieked as she passed silently out.

Alone now with his thoughts and grief, he pondered over the things she had said to him. Analyzing the situation presented, he realized he was in love with Demetra, or with something she represented. At least there was something which had not found a response in Layna.

To him Demetra was the essence of spirituality, while Layna was the embodiment of all earthly beauty with which he had become so enamoured that he could love nothing but her physical charms.

But now as his loneliness and grief grew upon him something like a fiend took possession of him. He had lost Layna. And Demetra—what of her? He knew she did not love him, yet if it had not been for her he would still have Layna. Not wishing to put upon Demetra the blame for a condition of which she was totally unconscious, he endeavored to put it out of his mind. But like a haunting spectre, that one thought—his

Layna was gone—shadowed his mind. He was going to be revenged for that loss. He could not understand that he alone was the one responsible for the action of Layna in going away from him.

Man loves and admires the physical charms and beauty of woman; he likes to claim it as one of his possessions, to feel that it belongs to him by right of conquest. There is a time when even a woman without physical charm will appeal to him. She may be coarse, unrefined, yet the other element of her nature responds to his desire for expression on the first plane. Then comes the desire of the psychic self for expression; the highly developed sensitiveness and spirituality of another woman appeals to him on the higher plane and she stimulates and inspires him to create and deliver to the world some great masterpiece of art or music. And so it was with Kasaan. The physical charms of Layna delighted him, but it was the delicate sensitiveness, sweet tenderness and infinite purity of Demetra that awakened in him the possibilities of his higher nature—those possibilities that Layna had endeavored to arouse—that expression of his once highly developed psychic mind.

CHAPTER XX

It was a fantastic, distinct structure, this auditorium in the Cave of Musical Diamonds. The platform was constructed, tier upon tier of stones of varying vibratory rates of musical intensity. The walls of marble on either side were so electrically sensitized as to carry the music played within their confines, upon electrical waves out into the universe where it was heard in various halls throughout the world, constructed in such a manner as to receive the delicate vibrations of music played within this electric auditorium in the Cave.

One of these unique halls was in Salt Lake City, the birthplace of Lesaria Vinson. Standing amidst the majestic serenity of a pine grove, high upon a picturesque hillside, overlooking the Valley, it proclaimed to mankind a newer epoch in the field of art and science—an ideal fraught with the magnificence of the sublime.

Tokalon, with a soul alive to the worship of music, had conceived within his fertile brain the bringing into creation of an ideal that would break the shackles of convention which bind the

inspiration of genius, and give to the entire world at one moment, the palpitating beauty of inspired music. In the creation of these halls his ideal had been realized.

Among all the peoples of the earth, human nature is much the same, imbued with the same emotions, the same fundamental instincts. In the heathen there is response, in his crude demonstrations, to the stimulus of music and he should be permitted the same privilege of enjoying the music of the genius, as his more cultured and civilized brother. Through music is revealed to him man's aspirations, progress, development from the merely material phase of life to his triumph over the physical powers and the attainment of a higher life through appreciation of the beautiful.

And now let us acclaim the manifestation of this unique world-wide première. We are in the Electric Auditorium of the Cave of Musical Diamonds. The inhabitants of the Electric City have thronged the hall. There are some visitors present, too. Alvan Huntington, the young scientist, still very much in love with Lilith and hopeful of gaining her hand, has arrived, accompanied by Lilith's mother and Mrs. Vinson. Demetra, Tokalon, and Kasaan are there also. A serious illness has kept Lilith confined to her new home in the Electric City.

The hall is a flood of yellow light emanating from innumerable hidden reflectors, while the platform is bathed in a brilliant ray of gold which every few seconds flashes forth throughout the place in a gradually fainter hue, blending into a delicate spray of ultra violet upon the blue marble walls.

A hush, a silence, suddenly fills the hall. The soft breath of muted strings echoes through the air. The young player is upon the platform and the strains of music as they leave his touch are being carried simultaneously around the world, registering the performance in each one of the electric halls and giving to the multitude assembled, an exact reproduction of the inspired music. His playing carries the same penetrating message of beauty and color that has always belonged to his art. Never has a performer been presented in a more unique manner and before a people so mysteriously remote and distinct from the outer world a people awakening to the throbbing activities of life, aroused from the stagnation of their own creative powers. And with what genuine enthusiasm they receive the young violinist; what innate understanding and appreciation they manifest. It seems as if a whole orchestra were combined within that one instrument and they grasp breathlessly every delicate strain as it resounds in

a dying echo throughout the building, an echo carried through the Cave, the entire city.

Let us turn our attention for the moment to the party of people half obscured from view in that spacious box upheld by four handsomely carved marble figures; a box extending back from the platform itself and so constructed as to prevent its occupants from being observed by the audience. It is hung in luminous gold and blue draperies, their rich soft folds lighting and shading the interior of the box.

Demetra, Tokalon, Mrs. Vinson, Kasaan, Alvan Huntington and the mother of Lilith were the special guests of this box tonight. Demetra was completely absorbed and lost to the world around her when Lesaria came upon the platform. She listened to his playing with an understanding beyond the comprehension of human being. There was an intangible remoteness that was part of herself. Within the depth of her quietness, there was a tantalizing fascination which Kasaan found curiously disturbing. In vain he endeavored to penetrate this profound quiet, to gain one glance from her eyes, one word from her lips. But the perfect calm of Tokalon, and the infinite power of the loving tenderness with which he had nurtured Demetra from the first day he had found her, had always been an armour of protection with which he surrounded

her and she was secure from any adverse influence, unless some sudden, unrelentless Fate, some diabolical power over which he had no control, entered in and severed the golden thread of this protective love. But Fate had peculiarly marked the path of this fair young creature and her destiny was ever to be influenced by events and circumstances over which she had no control. Hers was to be a life apart from the ordinary existence and one upon which depended another's career, happiness, inspiration, success.

The recital was now at an end and the audience was dispersing and the brilliant young performer had added new laurels to his glowing wreath of fame. The entire world had heard him and had approved. Tokalon's electric halls had been a decided success in receiving and reproducing the music projected from this auditorium and sending it out upon the sensitive electric waves throughout the universe. The simple theories of electricity which science had believed to be an unfathomable mystery had been put into the creation of these halls and the power of the fundamental laws of electricity and magnetism had been demonstrated. The world was alert, wondering what the austere wisdom of Tokalon and the genius of Lesaria Vinson were to give them next.

Kasaan was genuinely gracious in his praise to

the brilliant performer and to Tokalon for his achievement in the construction of the halls. Almost abruptly he extended his hand to Demetra.

“Goodbye.”

“Are you leaving us?” she asked in evident surprise.

“Yes, I am going out among those people to which you and your friends belong; out again into the world from whence I came long ago. Your great master, Tokalon, is doing more for the people down here than I ever could do. They no longer need me and I have work to do in that great world outside, so I am leaving here now. I wished to hear your wonderful violinist play, that is why I remained until this time. But why do you all look so wonderingly at me? Perhaps you are puzzled by my strangeness. But I will tell you my story—the story of this city, these people here, and myself.

“It was during the world war of 1914 that it all happened. I, with a crew of six men, was operating a German submarine in the Mediterranean. We had set out to destroy a British ship sailing from a port in Egypt. Then came the fateful day. We torpedoed the ship but saved the lives of the people aboard. There were 36 women and 24 men, most of them Egyptians, although there were some English and French

among them. We transferred them to the submarine and started on our way to Germany. We had not been traveling for many hours when the submarine suddenly became uncontrollable and we lost all sense of direction. We kept going down until we were many fathoms below the surface of the ocean and our rising gear could not be adjusted. We were getting nearer and nearer the ocean floor when all at once we were caught in a swirling current and dashed swiftly down, down, down. It seemed an eternity that this mighty force held us. Our air tanks were exhausted. The men clutched at their throats and the women fainted. Terror reigned, with the vivid realization that the end had come. A painful, suffocating death awaited us. Then quite suddenly, as if by some miracle, we found ourselves in a brilliantly colored lake. Its phosphorescent glow illuminated our pathway. It is the same lake through which you came in your aero-submarine. We were not yet out of danger, however. The powerful undercurrent of the lake hurled us still more deeply into the bowels of the earth. In another instant we felt a resistance and the mad journey of the submarine came to an end as a tremendous electric force held the car against the swirling current. Slowly the submarine began to turn as one force resisted the other and we were gradually and carefully lifted out of the

current. The life giving essence of the electricity was more than revivifying. We seemed to no longer demand oxygen to sustain us.

"There was no way of returning to the world we had left for our submarine, even though repaired, could not overcome the tremendous current which had brought us here. We then proceeded to build the necessary dwellings and make this place our future home. We discovered certain plant life which served as a physical sustenance.

"This Electric City holds the secret of everlasting life, for in all the years we have been here, death has not come among us and no one is a day older than that first day when we found ourselves here. We have lived in peace and harmony and propagated our people until now we number about 95,000. I do not believe there is one among those who were in that submarine, who would wish to return to the outside world, because here there is a beauty and happiness one does not find on the outside."

"Kasaan, you have solved a mystery for us in giving the facts of these people, but why are you leaving them?" asked Tokalon.

"Because I am no longer happy here. This place is not for me now and I must go." He turned to Demetra, his eyes gazing steadily at her, his face wearing an inscrutable calm, "We

shall meet again—you and I—and at a time when you will need *me*," and he was suddenly and mysteriously gone, leaving them all perplexed and wondering at his strange mood and prophecy.

CHAPTER XXI

The recital over—Kasaan gone, leaving us the story of the Electric City, we return to the studio where Lilith awaits us and the news of the recital. She is resting more comfortably now and is enjoying the refreshing fragrance which permeates the atmosphere. Something akin to a divine presence fills the room.

Her voice, as she speaks rings out in clear, strong tones.

"Oh, I know it was a wonderful success, Lesaria, and I have something very interesting to tell all of you, so gather around me closely. Tokalon, it has been such an achievement for you both."

As Tokalon spoke there was solemnity yet triumph in his voice. "Yes, it was a great success. The vibrations even reached Mars and were registered there. I can tell from your expression Lilith, that you have seen and heard that which we have not. Your spirit was carried upon the wings of music to the planet Mars. Tell your experience to your mother and friends here, they will be interested."

Lilith began in low tones, yet there was something almost whimsical in her voice.

"At the moment Lesaria stepped upon the platform, my soul, loosened from its earthly fetters, took a transitory flight. A faint melody, as if borne upon delicately textured rustling wings was transfused throughout the room and before my vision, gliding silently to and fro, were silent forms draped in lightest gossamer, resembling the outline of the human form. They were transparent beings, now moving in graceful aerial evolutions, again mysteriously vanishing apparently blending with and becoming part of the atmosphere in which they moved. I fancied they chanted the soft echo of some unspeakable glory.

"Then suddenly I was aware of a powerful presence near me. The blood coursed rapidly and with an unutterable thrill of freedom through my veins. My limbs seemed joyously loosened from tightening fetters and I began swiftly to soar, to float away and afar off. The earth vanished from view. On and on I traveled with unimpeded lightness. Cloud after cloud rolled from my gaze as I was borne on through limitless space. And ever by my side, leading me, was this powerful presence, intangible and impalpable.

"The solitude of a worldless world of starry nebulæ enveloped me. And still, standing apart from this chaos of nebular matter, was the form

of the one who was leading me, the hand outstretched, beckoning me on. A myriad system of suns and stars and planets moved about us in a gigantic, chaotic splendor. Hideous figures loomed dimly into view; monster reptiles, apparently harmless, writhed and crawled and coiled about in this, the first stratum of a newborn world. This disordered planet of chaos, struggling into a life of order, and its innumerable shadowy inhabitants were left far behind and in another instant I beheld a world of radiant glory and symmetrical beauty—the creation of a sublime intelligence.

"Presently the shadowy outline of a building distinct in my memory, came into view. It was the theatre on Mars, and there upon the stage where long, long ago I had seen the opera performed. Lesaria stood with his violin, playing wondrous music to a spellbound audience of those people. Then vividly came before my mind, the day when my little brother and our girl companion and I, had attended the opera and he had confided in us his desire to be a great violinist.

"In this transit of my soul from the earth to Mars I discovered many things, among which were the records of our transmigration from Mars to the earth. Lesaria was my brother there and Demetra was the companion who shared our love and friendship.

"I also vividly realized the difference between the happiness of an existence on Mars and the struggle for happiness on this planet. Such a thing as war is unknown there. The transacting of business is never done with profit as the high aim but always with the idea of giving as much as possible for any stipulated exchange. And everyone is happily busy, creating and constructing. Unrest, poverty, dissatisfaction are unknown for each does his best for the other's comfort instead of the least for what he can get. What a contrast to this world of strife, war, unemployment and suffering, is this inverted aspect toward one's neighbor.

"But what a strange reunion of our three lives has Destiny's hand wrought and how evident is the mutual attraction and harmony that has existed between us since first we became reunited upon the earth, each to be an inspiration to the other.

"While I was absorbed with the picture and memory of our existence upon Mars, I suddenly perceived a ghostlike image of myself in the hall in the Electric City, a double phantom of myself. Here I was in the theatre on Mars listening to Lesaria playing and there I saw myself among your party occupying the vacant chair in the box. The scene then immediately changed. The walls in the Electric Auditorium in the Cave appeared

to open upon the outside world, and I beheld vast multitudes assembled in the Electric halls in every part of the land and with them I heard the gloriously inspired music which Lesaria was playing."

Alvan Huntington was the first to break the intense silence that filled the room. He rushed impulsively toward Tokalon, his handsome face pale, his eyes sparkling with suppressed emotion. His voice was deeply strained as he spoke.

"She is out of her mind, gone mad and you are responsible for it."

Lilith answered him, "Yes, Alvan, gone mad; that is what you and those who think as you do, will say. Because you cannot understand, you disbelieve, and because of that disbelief, which is the foundation of a certain ignorance of these things, you condemn. You say I am mad, because you do not know the difference between madness and sanity. Well perhaps there isn't much difference for I think we are all out of poise during some period of our life and this may be mine—your period of insanity is yet to come."

"Oh how can you mock at me like this, Lilith? I love you so much and want to take you away from this place!" exclaimed Alvan Huntington.

"Ah, but I do not wish to go," she replied half-teasingly, and yet over her lovely features was a

gleam of tenderness that enhanced all the more the serene beauty of her countenance.

"You could never understand me, Alvan, and I would not wish to make you unhappy. Here they understand. Just now you said I was mad because I had experienced something you are incapable of comprehending or feeling."

Young Huntington's voice broke into a low, painful exclamation, "Lilith, come away from here, from this haunting, mysterious, devilish place. Let me take you back with me, where you will be well and strong again. I love you and I want your love. You will surely lose your reason if you remain here. Tell me that you will come with me," and he was kneeling beside her, his hand feverishly clasping her own, his voice trembling with emotion.

"I do not love you. My life, my work is here. I cannot go away. Through Tokalon I have found the thing I have most longed to do all my life—to write—and here among these people I am happy with them and my writing. Until I met Tokalon I existed in a valley of shadows, fettered to earth, groping always in darkness. The world seemed so chilling and I rebelled at life. I was struggling for a light, a light that seemed to glimmer faintly in the vague distance. Then I met Tokalon. He has lifted me to his own celestial realm, inspired and taught me the wis-

dom of the ages. There have been times when my intellect, free and disembodied, has risen realm above realm to the highest spheres, and all the Universe and the eternity of life has seemed to be mine. I have existed in impalpable air, a new world has opened to me. I have wandered with him through the realms of music, poetry, art, mystery. His spirit has been my companion and its inspiration has given me a new language, a language in which I have created."

"Then it is he you love," cried Alvan Huntington.

"But with a love that is different," replied Lilith. "A universal love; all thought, all ideal, one dream everlasting, for he is of the Universe, his love is not of the individual."

"He holds an uncanny influence over you, Lilith. You are so changed, so different since you have been here."

"That is only your imagination, Alvan."

"Well, I do not believe in him, or anything he does."

"That is not necessary," calmly answered Tokalon. "But let me tell you something. Grave danger lies ahead, a professional conspiracy, be very careful with whom you deal. You are going to marry, however, and you will be happy enough. There is a brilliant future in store for you, your name will stand out among your fellowmen. But,

your later life”—Tokalon paused—“I see a dark cloud over you. Your life ends rather tragically. But think not upon this, for life will be generally kind to you and there are some splendid achievements ahead.”

“You say these things, but I do not believe you.”

“I do not ask you to. However, you will find that what I say will come true.”

“We shall see,” muttered Alvan, then turning once more to Lilith, he asked, “Are my pleadings in vain? Will you not let me take you from this place? Do you not love me?”

“No, Alvan, I do not love you, and I am remaining here.”

“Then I am leaving now. Goodbye,” and he pressed her hand fervently to his lips.

“Good luck to you,” she said, as he gazed at her. Bidding goodbye to the others he left the room, the Electric City, and before long was once again in the outside world.

Tokalon spoke, “He loves you, Lilith, but other interests will soon absorb him and help him to forget.”

“I hope so, for I do not wish him to suffer in his love for me.”

The experience of Lilith caused renewed efforts to be put forth in an attempt to get a tangible

message from the inhabitants of Mars. It was an assured fact that music had already reached the planet but why was it not interpreted?

Then the thought had been given birth that perhaps through this unlimited electric power and the power of music, the long wished for communication with Mars might be realized. Accordingly there was invented great tone magnifiers which instruments would control the electric currents of the earth, causing these currents to respond very readily to the vibration of music. Also there was the invention of the transformers, which instruments were so constructed as to transform tone into their relative colors, and to transform into sound any returned message from the planet Mars, should there be one.

CHAPTER XXII

Under the brilliant dome of the Artists' Hall, bathed in a myriad of colored lights, Demetra, beautiful daughter of the Mystic East, became the bride of Lesaria Vinson, world-renowned violinist. The entire population of the Electric City had assembled to pay tribute to their much loved artist and his bride on this the day of their marriage and departure from this strange, underground world, this city where haunting beauty held sway and lingering melodies softly murmured, where art and science, life and mystery was their code. It was an intense, enthusiastic, unique assemblage—wholesome and sincere in their love and praise, and anxious to bestow upon the young genius and his bride every hospitality which the quaint, weird charm of their own little world offered.

This wedding was indeed, a most fitting culmination for the departure of the musician and Demetra. There was a charming dwelling situated upon the crest of a sloping hill in the Cottonwood Canyon in Salt Lake City, and to this was returning Lesaria Vinson and his bride.

In this mountain abode, their bridal home, sheltered and protected by the great swaying pine trees, frowned down upon by the neighboring, snow-capped peaks, he was going to seek rest and solitude away from the world of men and women, with its demands and babbles.

The loving sky and the romance of nature were companions enough to these two whose hearts were as a symphony of exquisite harmony and each day that passed confirmed and strengthened that love. They roamed about in the stillness of the forest, conversing with the silent things of the earth, and the days and nights and weeks and months were whiled away in an enchanted existence that knew no time.

There is no need to keep record of those happy days. What matters it how long they have thus dwelt in this lovely spot? But an event was soon to take place that must be inscribed upon the records of time and history.

What a thrill of unknown joy fills the heart of the young mother at the knowledge of her first born. A new soul is to come into the world to be guided and guarded from the cradle, to be nurtured for a future rich with the blessings of Heaven.

The deepening mystic, purple shades of evening were descending over the valley. An anxious restlessness seized Demetra, a foreboding and

presentiment undefinable, tortured her thoughts. Slipping one hand into that of her husband she murmured, "This solitude, this impenetrable stillness, awes me tonight. Let us go out into the deeper quiet of the evening."

With a gentle tenderness, Lesaria placed his arm about the slight young shoulders and they went out into the evening glory.

Her voice blended softly with the stillness, as she spoke. "Oh, how I love to listen to the sighing of the trees, to the wind singing weird little melodies among the branches; to see the after-glow of the sunlight playing and dancing on the leaves; to listen to the plaintive love notes of the birds; to be within the shadow of the hills and watch the setting sun and dusk come on with its fantastic glory, creeping into the bewitching hours of night, when all the world is still, when one can feel the throbbing pulsation of the Universe, the very essence of its life in fragrant, refreshing draughts invigorating the spirit, purifying and strengthening the mind! To look up into the great deep blueness of the heavens and watch that silvery myriad of glittering worlds that seem to be calling, beckoning, challenging one!"

And so they wandered on, hand in hand—two lovers these—beneath the shadows of the solemn trees. Evening had spread her velvet mantle of

gold and purple over the earth and all was still with that throbbing stillness that comes only from the silence of the Infinite.

Demetra was wrapt in deep thoughtfulness when suddenly she clutched the hand that held her own.

"Listen, Lesaria dear, to the gentle rustling of the leaves, whispering to me, singing a melody like the soft tinkling of silvery bells, bringing a message from out the distant past, warning me of an impending disaster. This is the song:

'Ah, sweet maiden, so young and fair,
We are the voices from out the air,
Bringing, singing a warning true,
A heart's deep sorrow awaiting you.'

'Wander not to the unknown abyss,
For there lies but broken happiness,
Ah, sweet maiden, so young and fair
List to the voices from out the air.' "

"My dear," said Lesaria tenderly, "you are nervous and tired tonight. Let us go in, your mind is overwrought, nothing is going to happen."

"Yes, yes, it is a mother's instinct!" she cried brokenly. "My unborn babe—danger awaits it—and I am so afraid!" and her voice broke into a low nervous sobbing.

Understanding with a sincere sympathy her condition, Lesaria lifted her into his arms and

carried the trembling little body into the house. Then taking his violin he played a soft, low lullaby and soon the wearied eyes were closed in slumber that was sweet and tranquil, and those disquieting fancies were stilled in the peace of deep sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

Emerging from his life in the bowels of the earth, Kasaan had no scruples as to his ability to wield the whole of nature's chain of forces for the gratification of his one desire, revenge. His heart had been hardened beyond repentance; he had given up his soul to Satan and by repeatedly yielding, his will was gradually losing its resisting power. His body had become shrunken, his face was haggard, the features were more disgustingly ugly than ever, and his fingers reached out in a stealthy claw-like frightfulness. Continually passing from the height of hope to the depth of despair, waves of hysterical passion sweeping over him, these sudden transitions were accompanied by spasms of physical suffering which were rendering him a wreck bodily and mentally. Imbued with a tremendous fund of energy, cultivated by his life in the Electric City, which had been concentrated on his higher ambitions there, this energy was now aroused and set loose in a destructive riot of vengeance.

The mystic East with its centuries' old superstition, splendor and romance had called to him

and he had answered the lure of its fascination. A country redolent of the early passions of civilization, the good and the evil: alluring with the glory of its desert calms and immortal silences: fragrant and restful with its treasures and worship: the land of the student and psychic, the materialist and the ignorant, with its squalid settlements and its palaces of luxury, all were a part of the daily life of the Eastern World. And it was here that Kasaan found a fitting atmosphere for his own evil profession. He had become an adept in the art of Black Magic and it was easy to get followers from among the ignorant and superstitious.

Let us enter into the mysterious chambers over which he is lord and master. How completely apart is this atmosphere from that of the refreshing beauty of the Electric City! There all was lightness and the essence of purity: here all is mystery and darkness. But it seems fitting for him to dwell amidst this atmosphere in the secret dens of these evil magicians, who ply their trade so dexterously before the world. His own powers are being directed into a channel of wickedness and revenge, and here he can hold free reign.

We enter a room that is deftly concealed from the eyes of the outside world. Its four walls are heavily covered with brilliantly colored fabrics. In each corner there is an uncanny subdued light

emanating from curiously hidden fixtures in the walls. The floor is carpeted with a handsomely woven rug and squatting about, their arms folded, heads bowed, dressed in turbans and gowns of red satin, are a number of young "students," meeting here to receive the magic teachings of Kasaan.

A heavy drapery at the end of the room parts and a young boy, carrying a lighted candle before him, slowly enters. His movements are rhythmically measured; his eyes gaze steadily ahead. Directly following him is Kasaan, robed in a gown and turban of lustrous satin of a delicate yellow hue, tied with a red sash. Upon his entry the students, still seated, bow low, touching the floor with their hands. He takes his seat upon a platform before them and together they go through an incoherent mumbling and chanting of syllables, after which the lesson begins.

About the room are various jugs and vases and devices for offering up sacrifices, and the soft burning of incense sends into the air delicate circles of smoke, diffusing its languorous odor throughout the place. And this is the environment in which this man, once capable of a great constructive power, seeks to dwell, crushing out the fineness of his soul because of the dominating passion for revenge, and because, too, he loves the abode of the devil and the things that are evil.

His determination for revenge takes him from this abode to the home of Demetra in Salt Lake, for he knows that the protection of Tokalon is not so vital since her marriage. And since she is so absorbed in the life of her husband, stimulating him in his music, there will come a time when her intense and slight physical self will need renewed vitality and quite unconsciously there will come a receptive state when Kasaan can work his influence, either upon her, or through one very near her.

CHAPTER XXIV

Mother and father look upon the first-born! Those anxious hours of travail, lingering hours within the shadows of the Unseen Valley, have passed, and all is a sublime calm. Opening its eyes into a new and mysterious world of light, the little stranger greets father and mother. A flower beginning to bloom in rare fragrance; a second Lesaria to nurture from the cradle, to mould into a life of illustrious achievement; a figure in the world symbolical of all that is good and pure and wise. These were the first and natural dreams of the young parents for this little new-born soul.

The winged passenger of Time made record of each childish caprice, and a quickening intelligence was soon manifest in the little mind. Like the glimmering of a sunbeam, its presence radiated everywhere in the household. That holy bond of love was more strongly fettered by this golden link, and those three beings lived in a world of childlike beauty and expression, in the sublimity of this new life, their new joy.

But oftentimes when sitting near the cradle of

her little one, tenderly watching and caressing it, the young mother seemed vaguely to feel a darkening shadow lurking near, and instinctively she would fold her babe closely to her bosom as if to protect it from an impending danger. There would come to her mind the ghostlike memory of that evening when she heard the message in the sighing of the trees, and a warning fear for the safety of her child would tantalize her thoughts and she often fancied, as she listened to its crooning and watched its tiny hands grasping for the glittering sunbeams playing about the cradle, that she saw it snatched from out her arms and gone forever. But she would not allow these thoughts to linger in her mind and with all the will of her being she would crowd them out with a lullaby hummed over the tiny bed.

Lesaria observed these fleeting shadows that now and then darkened that beautiful white brow. "My dear, what is it?" he asked as he stepped near the cradle where Demetra sat.

"Sometimes I get so afraid, I think I am a great coward Lesaria."

He pressed his lips upon the mass of dark hair which fell around her head, then bent over the tiny face that lay laughing up at him and printed a delicate kiss upon the baby cheek, and a silent tear fell.

In the little one's eyes a happy light seemed to

glisten and already they fancied a knowing intellect animated its being.

"Look, there it is with its hateful countenance; its long, ugly fingers reaching out for my baby! Lesaria, save us! Save us!" cried Demetra in a painful half-smothered sob.

"I see nothing Demetra dearest, you are both safe. It is only a mother's fear for her newborn."

As she looked into his eyes—and they were so filled with love and sympathy,—she smiled and clasped his hand and was content and calm under that serene expression.

CHAPTER XXV

It is night and the Evil One is near. Under cover of darkness he and his conspirators seek to do their work. A breathless, melancholy silence permeates the forests and in the House of Love all is quiet in slumber. There it stands high upon the hill amidst the great pine trees that like guarding sentinels protect it from the outside world and those solitary rocks on every side almost defy one to approach this haven. The silver rays of the moon are playing amidst the branches and throw a slanting shadow over the dwelling, half-concealing, half-revealing it.

Among those trees, shadowy outlines can be observed, stealthily moving to and fro. Now the forms of three men loom up in bold relief and a soft gleam of light falls over them revealing their black masks and shrouded figures. Kasaan, the fiend, is at work. Revenge is his sinister motive. Since that day in the Electric City, when he first beheld Demetra he had wanted her, and an unreasoning passion for this creature so pure and lovely had consumed his being and during these years he had waited for this malicious revenge.

When she was near Tokalon, Kasaan was powerless to exert his evil influence. This all the more rankled his temper and filled him with a greater hatred and a stubborn determination. But now the spirit which Tokalon had invoked to be ever watchful over Demetra, could not save her offspring from the wicked power that Kasaan had cultivated for years, and besides, since Demetra's marriage she was under the protection of her husband and Tokalon had left her in that loving care. The Evil One became usurper of the throne at a moment when Tokalon's forces were entirely merged in his work in the Electric City. This was the opportunity the ever watchful Kasaan had long waited for, knowing that his day would come sooner or later; that day when his Satanic power could take possession of a soul over which heretofore he had had no influence. Demetra's child was now the object of his revenge.

Kasaan and his men creep close to the side of the house and peering through the half-opened shutter, he sees the child as it lies wrapt in deep slumber. He chuckles to himself, a low wicked laugh, "By the heavens, revenge is now mine!"

He whispers hoarsely to his men, "Quick, we must not delay! Do not waste one moment! By the fiends of Hell, we cannot yet be sure of our success! Time is valuable, make haste!"

One of the men springs into the room, swiftly

covers the face of the sleeping infant, and seizing it in his arms is at the window and out in an instant with his little burden.

"Ah, good work! Good work, Narro!" mutters Kasaan, and their figures are instantly enveloped within the darkness of the forest. And the moon and stars—those silent watchers in the heavens above—are all that know, in a world asleep, whither leads the path of those kidnappers, those fiends of the night, who had placed upon the threshold of a happy home, the grim image of tragedy and sorrow. . . .

Dawn was breaking; the sun in azure glow was struggling above the eastern horizon. It poured into the room where the child had lain and in glittering capriciousness fell across an empty bed. The young mother arose and going to her little one's bed found no smiling face, no tiny outstretched arms to greet her.

"Lesaria," she cried, "they have stolen our babe!" and fell across the bed in a swoon.

There followed many days of anxiety, of tender care and watchfulness on the part of Lesaria for his beloved Demetra. The shock and grief occasioned by the disappearance of their child had thrown the young mother into a fever and delirium, in which the utmost care and caution had to be taken to save her life.

Lesaria was a faithful companion at her bedside and each day she was quieted and lulled to sweet peace by the magic beauty of his music. In time it had the wanted restful effect and at last the suffering soul became more tranquil, the fever abated and a new light shone from the eyes of Demetra, and into the worn, suffering face of Lesaria came a more hopeful light.

Once as he was playing a soft melody to her, she looked up at him and a faint sweet smile wreathed the pale face. "Lesaria your music seems to come from far away. It is so delicate, so exquisite, and oh so painful—my baby, my baby!" and she lapsed once more into a state of semi-consciousness. Lesaria pressed the fevered brow with his hands and the cool touch aroused her.

"The heavy weight upon my temples seems to have rolled away—my head feels cooler—and—let me hold your hand Lesaria," and as he clasped her hand within his own he bent low and kissed her lips.

"We must go away from here when you are well my dear. We will go back to the music and the people."

"Ah yes, to the music and the people and our baby," she said softly—"we must find our baby." A low sob filled her throat, and Lesaria struggled to keep back the sobs that were breaking his own heart.

CHAPTER XXVI

“Ah! young mother, let not your sorrow weigh too heavily upon you. Live in the glory and the love of your husband; you his inspiration, the soul of his violin. Grieve not too deeply for the lost child.”

Three years had elapsed since Lesaria Vinson and his bride had retired to that haven of love and peace where sorrow lurked in tragic mockery upon the threshold. And now that unwelcome guest had bid them come forth from this abode where love and happiness had held sway, and the eyes of the world were once more upon this famous artist. Too long already had the golden strings of his violin, the magic sweetness and pathos of his touch been stilled, and a fervent reception was awaiting his reappearance before the public.

It was a tragic struggle for the young mother to become reconciled to the mysterious disappearance of her baby, and there were times when she was almost overwhelmed by her deep grieving and felt she was being drawn relentlessly into that undercurrent where reason becomes shat-

tered. Her husband needed her; she was such a vital part of his music that she must be brave and live on for him.

As the days passed away, strange moods and restless yearnings found an abode within her being. Long hours were spent in reflection, in listless meditation. Something so vital, so necessary to her own self-existence, seemed to have passed out in the months following her little one's disappearance. Vague, intangible fancies and fears crowded into her mind. She had been the one on whom her husband had drawn for his inspiration, and it was that inspiration that had given the divine spark to his wondrous music, but strangely enough this no longer satisfied her.

Up to the time of the loss of her baby she had been content in the love of her husband and his music, and their baby had added a new joy, a new interest to their love. But that desire for the accomplishment of creative work, what did it mean? Surely her life had been wondrously happy and full of achievement with Lesaria, why was she so discontented now? What were these strange, unknown yearnings?

The opening concert took them to a popular South American city, the rendezvous of the élite, the critical, the artistic, of that continent. A city of wealth, luxury and extravagance, its patrons could afford to indulge in their every whim and

the art of the genius was deeply appreciated and only the best was accepted.

It was the afternoon of the day before the concert. Demetra and Lesaria had gone for a drive to one of the famous art galleries. The day was pleasant, the air was filled with the song of birds, the fragrance of the early springtime. Demetra was happier today than she had been for many weeks and this gave a brighter glow to her face, and filled her husband with more of happiness, too.

They entered the gallery and after passing through several halls, Demetra lingered before an exquisite canvas while Lesaria was engaged in conversation with a fellow artist, at the further end of the hall. She was wrapt in admiration of this masterpiece, entitled "Darkness and Light." In the background the shadow of the slight emaciated figure of a girl was outlined against a sky of blackness. Her arms were outstretched and a look of pain and sorrow was on the wan features. In the foreground was a maiden, beautiful, supple, strong. Her head was thrown back in an attitude of freedom; her arms reached heavenward toward a light breaking through the rift of purple clouds, and the outline of the slender young body was rapturously alive with a spiritual hope of understanding and peace.

Demetra did not hear a voice beside her, and it

was not until Kasaan gently touched her hand that she realized someone was near her. She looked up and met his quiet, compelling gaze.

He was the first to speak. "You admire that painting?"

"Yes, it reveals to me so much of truth, it seems almost to speak to one it is so vibrant with life."

"I am acquainted with the artist," he continued. "He is indeed a master painter, a great and highly developed soul."

She was silent for a moment, then turning from the canvas, "But you—how is it we have met here, like this?"

"You may remember I told you we would meet again at a time when you needed me—that day has come. It is here—now—you do need me," and he held the half-frightened inquiry of her eyes within the dark, penetrating glow of his own steady gaze.

"What do you mean," she half-murmured, drawing away from him. "I do not understand."

"But you will—later," he said kindly, coldly, emphatically. "Oh, by the way, I am attending the concert to be given by your husband tomorrow evening. We shall meet there again."

He bowed graciously and was gone, leaving Demetra gazing after his awkward, angular form, a perplexed and puzzling look upon her countenance, scarcely able to comprehend all that

he had so strangely and prophetically uttered. There was an assurance about his manner, his attitude, that frightened her, that repelled her, yet drew her near to him. She did not know what it was that awakened the desire to follow him. She feared and hated him, and it was this fear and hate that unwittingly made her his victim.

Strange to say, he had aroused her desire to return to her writing. This desire was something that had been lost since her first meeting with Lesaria when she had become completely absorbed in him and his music. Kasaan suddenly had seemed to satisfy her yearnings, to fill the place in her life that had been occupied by Lilith, when in their meeting in Cairo, Lilith, perceiving the restlessness of her nature, had so successfully stimulated her in the highest art, that of creative writing. In that moment just gone when Kasaan had left her standing there in bewilderment, a whole new world seemed to open to her. She could see her father's unfinished work and seemed to hear him call to her to begin where he had left off. She knew that she needed Kasaan, just as he said she would. Her whole being revolted against this thought, yet she was helpless to overcome the strange power he seemed to have wielded. This was the first time they had met since the day of his departure from the Electric

City. She was not in love with him, and never had been, yet why this sudden peculiar conflict of emotions?

The evil Kasaan knew now he was gaining the master hand over Demetra. His early knowledge of the fundamental principles of life, a knowledge that came to him in a stage of a higher development, he was now using for his own selfish gains, and this evil selfishness was the first principle of black magic by which he worked.

His activities for the past few years had been directed on a low plane and he had stolen Demetra's child knowing through its loss he would have control of her because in her agonized grief there would be an intensified yearning for motherhood, which must manifest itself in the higher realms of creation, and in this higher realm he could stimulate her writing, thereby hoping to keep his influence over her always.

CHAPTER XXVII

Sought after by the courts of the world, idolized by humanity, worshipped alike for his goodness and genius, the reappearance of Lesaria Vinson, world renowned violinist, had been heralded around the continent. The people were eager to greet again their idol of the violin. His music had been declared by all to be something different. He had struck a new note in the mastership of that instrument, which others had endeavored also to produce. He had many imitators, but his music, once heard, lingered forever in the memory.

For tonight's recital, the first he had given since his marriage three years ago, an audience of twenty thousand people had assembled, expectant, enthusiastic. But in the vast multitude was one person whose presence had the power to inspire or shatter the performance, and that person was Kasaan.

Mrs. Vinson and Demetra were seated very near the platform; Kasaan, as yet unobserved by them, sat just opposite. The violinist came on the stage; there was a thunderous applause, then

silence as he raised his bow to the strings. For that one instant Demetra seemed to grasp life with tense finger tips. As he began to play her whole body vibrated to that something high and elusive in his playing. The violin in his hands was like a thing of life, breathing, pulsating, throbbing, as the strings quivered delicately under his highly sensitive touch.

As he continued playing, Demetra was conscious of a powerful influence near her. Quite involuntarily she turned her head and was held by the keen steady gaze of Kasaan. There was a singular radiance about his ugly features that almost made him seem handsome. An inexplicable thrill shot through her being. Her husband had finished his number and the entire house was shouting, waving, calling to him. Kasaan took advantage of this moment and approached Demetra.

"He is playing unusually well tonight. His soul thrills with his music and his hearers have caught his mood."

Demetra was so delighted with the reception the audience had given her husband, that she did not observe the quiet, contemplative demeanor with which Kasaan spoke.

"Yes," she replied, "it is wonderful, very wonderful, and oh! it makes me so happy to see how they still love him and the music he gives them."

The next number was played with a tragic fire as if some impending disaster were near at hand. The low somber notes carried a foreboding message to Demetra; a thrill of pain shot through her. Now he swept into an allegro of triumphant victory, then surrendered to a melodious passage of such delicacy that it was like the falling of a tear upon a withering rose. The audience was held in an enchanted silence. This was their manner of demonstrating that they, too, had caught the message of the music. Their intense silence broke at length. Women sobbed and men were seen to wipe their eyes. The musician seemed to be struggling with an unknown foe who was trying to conquer him, and this gave to his playing an abandon, a breadth of passion, so electrifying that it had swept his hearers from their feet for that one brief moment. They were reluctant to let him go when his program for the evening was finished and insisted upon more music, which he gave to them with the same fervor and power of expression.

It was past midnight when Lesaria and Demetra were at last alone. She observed that he appeared troubled.

Slipping near him and placing one arm about his shoulders, she said, "You were such a wonderful success tonight! The strings of your violin were the strings of your heart! I felt that! And

yet Lesaria, there was something about your playing that I have never before heard. You seemed to be struggling against an unseen enemy, and I too, was struggling with you—yet somehow it held me fast."

He looked at her quickly. "Did you feel that too? There *was* some strange vibration, some influence, in that hall that was trying to overwhelm me and I was instinctively opposing it."

Like a thunderbolt, a revelation came to Demetra. She was silent for a moment. Then as if musing or contemplating, she said half to herself and half aloud, "I wonder—I wonder."

Then turning to Lesaria, "Kasaan was present to night. You know he is a sinister mortal; powerful in his way and very jealous of you. Could it be that he is using his influence against us?" And back in her mind burned those words he had uttered in the art gallery the day before.

"And he was there? I did not know that. I wonder—and yet why should he attempt to destroy our happiness and our music?"

Demetra made no answer. Her eyes were closed as if to shut out that image and the thoughts that perplexed her mind. But somehow she felt that Kasaan had a mocking motive in his presence at the concert.

CHAPTER XXVIII

What was that awful fear, that vague terror that filled the mind of Demetra? And Kasaan, why was he ever in her thoughts, in her dreams at night? His ugly face was ever near; his black eyes leered upon her; his clawlike fingers hovered above her head as if waiting to clutch her in their grasp. Awakening in the light of day, startled and afraid, she would glance nervously about the room, expecting to see this phantom of her dreams. But how contradictory were her thoughts! There were moments when she really wanted to be with him. Possessing none of the finer qualities of her husband, directly a contrast in temperament, in mental and physical organization, she was strangely attracted to this coarse, soulless man who had wilfully set about to wreak vengeance upon her and her loved ones. His influence was a diabolical power which found a strange response in her sensitive being; something she could not yet comprehend.

Her love for her husband was changing—of that she was certain—and yet she could not understand her feelings toward the one who had

loved her so truly, and whom she had loved truly in return.

Lesaria was conscious of her strangely changed attitude, and perplexed and anxious, yet he was at all times most tender and devoted. Demetra was seated one day at the piano, softly playing, Lesaria near her, when Kasaan was announced. Her fingers suddenly slipped from the keyboard and with a quick nervous movement she was at the door as he entered. He took her hand and kissed it graciously as she welcomed him with evident pleasure. As Lesaria noticed her vivacity of manner as compared with her former quiet attitude toward him, a pang of unutterable jealousy welled in his heart. He thought he detected in their glances, a mutual warmth of feeling. Why had she so suddenly changed when Kasaan entered the room? What was between them? Could it be that she was in love with him? No, no, impossible! These were the thoughts that stung him and he hated himself for them. Why should he be suspicious of his wife and jealous of this man? Was it his anxiety concerning her happiness that intensified his imagination? With all the strength of his will he endeavored to sweep those thoughts from his mind.

“The people are still clamoring for your music, Mr. Vinson. That first concert is their chief topic of conversation. Your name is on all lips.

When are we to be honored by a second such artistic event?" There was something almost triumphantly malicious in the peculiar sardonic smile of Kasaan as he spoke.

"I am delighted they were so well pleased, but I cannot say when I shall make another appearance," coolly answered Lesaria.

"But it will be soon, I trust," urged Kasaan. "Such an artist should not long remain silent. The world has need of your music."

"I have need of something more!" suddenly cried Lesaria, and his eyes flashed as they riveted their keen gaze upon Kasaan. "My wife"—and he turned a tender glance toward Demetra—"and our lost child." Kasaan winced and cast a furtive, guilty glance about the room.

"What do you mean?" he asked evasively. "You have them here."

"Yes, I have my wife here, but some fiend has possession of her mind." Lesaria moved toward him, looking squarely into his face and Kasaan endeavored to avert that penetrating gaze. "And our baby has been kidnapped," continued Lesaria, still keenly watching Kasaan.

"I do not understand you," exclaimed Kasaan in mock surprise.

Demetra interrupted at this point. "There is no need for you to understand, Kasaan. Come

let us go out among the flowers, the butterflies, into the soft, fragrant air."

This sudden reply and gayety of manner in Demetra puzzled and surprised Lesaria all the more, but the three left the room.

Out among the flowers, Kasaan and Demetra lingered over some of especial beauty which Kasaan apparently admired. Taking advantage of the opportunity of being alone with Demetra he said, "Demetra, you must fly with me soon! I am mad about you! I love you!" and he closed his long, fascinating ugly fingers over her delicate, white hand, and looked intently at her with those eyes that had so often repelled, yet attracted her.

"But, I am so afraid. No, no, I cannot leave Lesaria," Demetra exclaimed in a low hoarse whisper.

"You must!" he replied firmly, and the bony fingers tightened their clasp over her small hand. His eyes darkened, "Your writing, what of that? The unfinished book of your father's. *You* must complete it! You owe it to him, and you need me!"

"The unfinished book! yes, yes! I must write! I must write! I will go with you!"

Kasaan had gained his point. Demetra was lost in his overwhelming influence. About the

corners of his mouth played that smile so cruel, so triumphant.

That same evening, the distracted husband found this parting message, hurriedly written:

“Forgive me, Lesaria, and farewell forever. I must be as one dead to you in the future. Please do not endeavor to find me. Again I ask you to forgive and forget. Goodbye.

“DEMETRA.”

“My God! My fears were only too true! Demetra come back to me! And may God curse the fiend Kasaan!” cried Lesaria in a wail of anguish.

CHAPTER XXIX

“Throughout the Universe I send my cry,
‘Demetra, hear me, come back to me!’ No space
so impenetrable as to hide you from me; no void
so dark as to keep your shining presence from my
eyes! I will search the heavens above, the earth
below, until I find you! Oh, you knew not what
you were doing! When I read your note last
night every fibre of my being was torn with
anguish, with torturing jealousy; but I know you
did not mean to make me suffer like this, you did
not know what you were doing! My sweetheart,
my wife, the soul of my violin, the very essence
of my existence! Your love, like a rich, rare
flower, has strewn its fragrance, its ever chang-
ing beauty through my life. Demetra dearest, my
love and my faith in you are unshaken. This man
has fascinated you with his evil power. You do
not love him. Your highly attuned sensitiveness,
your delicate and finely cultivated spirit, he can
never understand or appreciate. Within my
heart is a vision of you in all your exquisite purity
and beauty. It exists as a vivid, living conscious-
ness. I know you will yet return to me. Until

that day, my violin strings are silenced and the world shall hear only my cry for you. That is the music I will give them—the music that is breaking my heart.” And this was the cry that went up from the heart of Lesaria Vinson.

Ah, Love, supreme mover of the Universe, how many are the tragedies, the broken lives, the glorious creations, that are recorded within thy category! How many are the names by which thou art known and called by mortal!

A union of immortal birth, was the love of Lesaria and Demetra. Perhaps it had been too perfect a love between two imperfect beings, and at a most unsuspecting moment, an ugly weed had thrust its roots into the love garden where only perfection seemed to exist.

When Demetra first met Lilith in Cairo, she had been ambitious to go on with the writings of her father, to finish where he had left off, and in Lilith she found a source of inspiration, for polarity is a matter of relationship and Lilith, receiving inspiration and stimulation from Tokalon, easily became the positive pole to the intense Demetra. Then came that first meeting with Lesaria when she found how necessary she was to him and to his music and there awakened a great love in both their hearts. To the greater intensity of his nature she was a gratifying source of inspiration, and all desire to pursue her

writing vanished until Kasaan, with his understanding of certain fundamental principles, came into her life determined to stimulate her desire for writing, and so hold her within his evil influence.

Tokalon, occupied as he was with his work in the Electric City, had not kept so careful a watch over Demetra, knowing that she was safe and very happy in the keeping of her husband.

And Lesaria, in the anguish of his sorrow, did not think to call upon Tokalon. Had he done so, he might have been spared much suffering. Traveling over the face of the earth day by day, at times he would grasp a faint clue as to the whereabouts of Demetra and Kasaan, then as if by some trick of Fate, he would just miss them and they were lost to him again.

The long, weary days lengthened into months, the months into years, and Lesaria Vinson, the brilliant genius, became a broken wreck of humanity.

Added to his burden of grief, came the sudden death of his mother. "Alone, alone, alone!" he wailed almost incessantly as he kept daily on in his wandering over the world. At last, after seven weary years, poverty and sickness forced him to return in utter hopelessness and despair to the little home in the mountains. He was alone, broken-hearted, disillusioned!

CHAPTER XXX

Demetra, once more in Cairo, the place of her birth, was thrilled with the beauty and sadness of her childhood memories. To find herself again in this city of magic lore and living over the scenes of her early days, filled her heart with pleasure and pain. Here Tokalon and Lilith had come into her life. Here amidst the majestic serenity of the immortal sphinx and pyramids, the awful calm of the great desert, and the turbulent yet passive beauty of the Nile, she had been welcomed and nurtured and loved.

How strangely unlike the days of her childhood were these latter days as they slowly, yet swiftly, rolled away upon the wheels of unforgettable time. Seven years had passed since she had gone away with Kasaan. She had counted those years by the days, weeks, months and at times the very hours!

The unfinished book of her father's had been completed and in addition she had written two more under the stimulation of Kasaan. They were the fruits of their years of association. But oh, how dearly she had paid! His sinister influ-

ence over her; the stimulation she had received from him during these years, had burned itself out. Never before in all this time had she felt so greatly the mighty love she had for Lesaria, until today. Her heart and soul were crying out to him, yet she could not return to him now. But if only she might find their baby and return it secretly to him that his life might be happier in its love and life! She had deserted him in a moment of unreasoning emotion and the thought of her act haunted her day and night.

She felt strangely unhappy and ill at ease as she stood by the window and watched the sun sinking over the distant hills, and afar off the dim outline of a pyramid was thrown into fantastic relief by the setting sun. Dusk was fast spreading over the land and the evening star twinkled brightly and alone in the blue heavens. Watching it, she was fascinated by its own loneliness in that vast space, and she murmured to herself, "In the silence of yon distant star my fate is read.

"Ah! Lesaria! Tokalon! Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me! Why did I go away with Kasaan? I am so utterly alone and unhappy and I despise him!"

Just then she heard sweet music. As an exquisite perfume is wafted from the breath of the flowers by the gentle breezes, so was the breath

of this music wafted to her ears. Its silvery strains were like the song of some nebulous spirit of the night, sitting upon the edge of yonder drifting cloud. The tones so elusive, so full of consolation and unrest filling her soul with a rare peace, mingled with a throb of pain. She hung eagerly upon each delicate note as it ebbed away in the distance, leaving a parting message of fanciful wonder and happiness, yet pulsating with agonized heart throbs.

Like one suddenly awakened from an enchanted spell, she cried out, "Lesaria, Lesaria, I have heard your music! I know you are near me, you have not forgotten!"

At this moment Kasaan entered the room and went toward her. Involuntarily she shuddered and drew back from him.

"So!" he cried with a sneer of half-concealed contempt. "You are crying for your husband, that wretched violinist who took you from me! I have tried to be kind to you, for I loved you—loved you madly. At times I felt that the spirit within you could arouse the best that was in me; but your aloofness, your hatred of me from the first moment we met in the Electric City, made me the more determined to have you at all costs, and I have had you these seven years. I have loved you my way, which has been a way of vengeance. Through the maddening love I had for

you many years ago, I lost the one who really loved me, but now my revenge is complete and you are mine and have been even though you hate me with a hatred beyond human power. You are mine, I say; you and his child belong to me!"

At these words, Demetra staggered toward him. Her eyes glistened like fire and the expression of her face was transformed into a wild terror.

"My child! My child!" she screamed. "You, you—have my child! Oh, how I hate you! I hate you!" she cried in her uncontrollable passion.

Then with a swift motion her long, delicate fingers buried themselves deeply in Kasaan's throat. In her sudden frenzy, unlimited strength had come to her.

"Tell me where my baby is!" she demanded hoarsely as her grip closed more tightly.

Kasaan, struggling to free himself from her death-like grasp, with a quick subtle movement unclasped the fingers that held him. Her strength had given way and now his own thin, ugly fingers clenched her wrists painfully.

"Curse you!" he cried fiercely. "You shall pay for this!"

A menacing expression came into his eyes. But Demetra did not hear his words for her body had crumpled at his feet. He looked down upon the silent form for an instant, then, moving

toward the door, touched a tiny button. A stolid-faced servant appeared. Kasaan motioned to the still form, his voice was husky, yet penetrating:

"Take her to the secret room of our Order in Black Magic Alley. You know the place to which I refer. Do not let anyone see you and be quick in this work. She will not awaken until you have her safely concealed in the room, so there will be no trouble to expect from her."

The servant nodded, lifted the body of Demetra into his arms and with his burden quickly and quietly disappeared. Kasaan put his hand to his throat. It pained him and the prints of Demetra's fingers were deeply imbedded within the flesh. He paced about the room nervously and awkwardly, placing first one hand upon his throat, then the other, as if endeavoring to ease the pain, and at the same time to solve some intricate problem. Then as if the answer had suddenly come to him, he whirled about and left the room.

He was afraid now, for he had been beaten at last. And the one whom he feared was Tokalon; for while Demetra had been with him, and by him stimulated for her writing, she had not called to Tokalon, of that Kasaan had been certain. But he was powerless now, because he could no longer stimulate her creative nature. And in the moment she had turned on him, Tokalon in the

Electric City had received her message of suffering and would hasten to her side. Kasaan trembled at the thought of his own utter weakness and helplessness and the results which were destined to follow.

CHAPTER XXXI

“Tokalon,” “Lesaria,” those names distinctly spoken and impregnated with profound meaning, aroused Tokalon from an absorbing reverie. It was the voice of Demetra, distinctly audible in the deep hush of the room.

Tokalon stirred slightly. “Yes, yes,” he murmured. “I know all,” and his voice continued in a low soliloquy, “You are very near me, Demetra; the throbbing of your presence fills the room and the warmth of your breath is upon my cheek. I have not yet learned the exact location of your abode, neither have I found Kasaan, but before the stars again appear in the evening heavens, you will be under my roof and Kasaan will have paid for this evil. Yes, paid many times over and the Universe will ring with his wails, with the suffering he has brought upon himself.”

As he uttered these words, Tokalon felt the sensitive vibrations of Demetra’s presence, and in the awful stillness that followed, a vaporous cloud ascended into the air, revealing the shadowy figure of Demetra moving slowly about him.

A slight chill shook Tokalon and he paced in

measured tread about the room, lost in deep concentration. Suddenly a sharp, clear voice rang out upon the air. It seemed to come from the surrounding space. Tokalon stopped, strangely alert, as if quickly awakened.

"Demetra," he whispered, and as if an impenetrable curtain had been drawn aside, the revelation came to him of Demetra's whereabouts, and also of the abode of Kasaan. Like a potent beam of light had this message come to him and in it he recognized that at last the evil spell of Kasaan was broken, and that his own power had triumphed over Kasaan's black magic, because after all these years Demetra had herself called for Tokalon, and Kasaan's influence ceased.

Tokalon hurried out upon the streets, past the swaying throngs of people with but one purpose in view. Soon his steps led him beyond the crowded drives, the swelling throngs of humanity. A long narrow street lay before him. He knew it well. It was the district known as Black Magic-or-Haunted Alley. This was the rendezvous of the Secret Society of Black Magic, as it was called. Away from the prying eyes of the outside world, these people cultivated their weird, evil lore in their secret chambers, unmolested and obscure. Many wild stories went afloat about the magicians and their street—stories of mysterious crimes, the disappearance of all who entered

there. So it had soon become known as a haunted place.

Tokalon made his way among the low-roofed buildings, scarcely glancing either to right or left, so deeply absorbed was he in reaching his destination. Suddenly a low wail reached his ears. Turning he saw a young lad staggering helplessly, keeping close to the buildings. Tokalon clutched his hand.

"Why, you are blind! What are you doing here?" he asked in a low tone. They were directly in front of the abode of Kasaan.

"He has taken away my eyesight," wailed the youth, who appeared to be but about eighteen years of age.

"More of his fiendish work," muttered Tokalon. "Come, tell me how this all happened."

Slowly and brokenly the youth related his pitiful story.

"For months I was a pupil of Kasaan's. Then I began to realize the tremendous evil of his teachings, the work of destruction he was doing, and constant rebellion burned within me. I did not wish to learn his wicked ways and revolted against his secret cult of black magic. This infuriated him into unreasoning hatred and revenge.

"He had me put into a secret room, shut out from all light, from all communication with any-

one save one of his men who brought me food each day. Then I began to realize that my vision was slowly darkening. I felt Kasaan's awful influence always surrounding me and something like a slow poison surging through my being. Today he came to me and with a mocking bitter sneer said, 'Well, you can go out into the world and find the light of a holier cult than our own; one that will teach you to be good and pious and loving to all mankind,' and his hateful voice rang out with contemptible blasphemy.

"He took me from that black and dreadful hell and I then knew I was blind. A dark gloom covers my heart and darker still is the awful gloom that obscures the light of the world from my eyes. Life means nothing now to me and I do not wish longer to live."

Tokalon, deep in thought looked steadily at him, then he placed his hands gently upon the young man's eyes. The latter uttered a thrill of joy.

"Oh, your touch makes me feel so much better. Already it seems as though I were beginning to see the light of day, the real world," and over the pitiful agony of his face there spread a smile of peace.

"You are beginning to see the light," answered Tokalon, slowly. "I can restore your eyesight if

you will remain with me for a few weeks, so that I may give you constant attention."

"Oh, gladly, gladly, will I do anything you ask! Your slightest touch thrills me with a new life and gives me a divine faith in you." There was something supremely touching in the pathetic appeal of this young man as he looked upon the Master Tokalon.

"Come, I have a further work awaiting me before we return to my dwelling," and Tokalon took the young man by the hand and together they pursued their way.

At an abrupt angle at the end of the street, Tokalon stopped for an instant, glanced about him, turned into a sharp passageway and in another moment was entering a concealed door that led into the room where Demetra was held prisoner. Once inside there was nothing that gave evidence of any life whatsoever. The room with its heavy, dark furnishings was oppressive. Tokalon moved slowly as if examining it carefully. At one end of the room he drew aside the heavy folds of a curtain and within, upon a bed lay the still form of Demetra. Tokalon paused—she had not seen him enter but an audible message came to his ears from the figure that lay so motionless.

"Tokalon, you are here," he heard her murmur.

"Yes," he softly replied, going toward the bed, "I am here."

Somewhat startled at the sound of his voice, Demetra turned quickly.

"Tokalon, Tokalon," she cried, "is it really you? Oh, I think I must have been dreaming for I imagined I saw you standing beside me and I was afraid I would awaken to find it only an illusion."

A deathly pallor concealed the delicate beauty of her face; her eyes were dark and heavy and shone with that peculiar luster that comes only from intense suffering.

"I have waited so long for you, Tokalon dear—so long—the days have been so dreary and painful, yet I knew you would find me and take me away with you. But Lesaria, where is he—and the baby?" and Demetra's voice died away and a languor that came from weakness and a depleted vitality settled upon her.

Tokalon placed his hands upon the pale brow. "Yes, I am taking you away." His soothing touch aroused Demetra. He lifted her into his arms and carried her from that room.

Once more out upon the street, this suffering burden of humanity safe within his strong arms, he entered an aerocar standing near. His faithful pilot had been carefully instructed as to the time and place of meeting and was there at the

exact moment ready for his master. In the car, also, was the blind youth and in another instant these three were soaring high into the air, far beyond the "Haunted Street" with its luring evil, its dark tragedy, its pitiful and wretched victims.

CHAPTER XXXII

Despised, scorned, dreaded—alone among his very people, Kasaan, the evil doer, the agent of the devil, was now a pitiless wreck of humanity. His deeds of destruction had reacted upon himself with horrible results. At the moment in which his wicked influence had been broken by Tokalon, he had been transformed into a most hideous creature.

His limbs were bent and crippled, his movements were painfully slow as he literally dragged his twisted body from one place to another. The expression of his eyes was that of a haunted and beaten animal; the cheeks were hollow, the cheekbones accentuated and projecting, the skin drawn and pallid. A disdainful curve was about the mouth, the corners turned down as if to repress a smile of bitterness that played about the lips. The long, ugly hands repelled by their uncanny, clawlike leanness, as they nervously twitched and trembled.

Not through any will of the Master Tokalon, had this punishment been inflicted upon Kasaan, but because he had perverted the psychic gift

with which his early life had been endowed, and had brought destruction upon others. Tokalon's great love for humanity became a barrier to Kasaan's evil work which, like a mirror reflected back his evil intent.

As Kasaan lay upon his cot, brooding over his misery, he was suddenly aware of a presence in the room. Glancing up, he saw standing in the doorway a familiar figure. Yet, could it be possible, he asked himself as he peered at the face in the dimly lighted room. Were his eyes deceiving him?

"Kasaan, I have come back to you," and the figure drew closer.

"You, Layna," he muttered, "can it be possible? But no, you cannot come to me now. It is too late, my life is over. Look at me, see what a wretched victim I am," he cried out in anguish.

Layna dropped her head, tears were in her eyes. "That is why I am here now, because we need each other. It is not too late." Her voice was broken by a low sobbing.

Kasaan dragged himself near her and, placing those clawlike fingers under her chin slowly raised her head until her eyes met his own. For a moment he did not speak, but gazed at her face with questioning astonishment.

"There is still some of the beauty left in your face, yet how different you are." He seemed to

be keenly analyzing every feature, every line. "But the glow that once shone in your eyes is gone and in its stead is an evasive, painful glare. The skin once so soft and fine is pale and heavily lined. But there still remains about the corners of your mouth, a trace of that inevitable, tantalizing smile. The once gay spirits have given way to a dull, listless despondency. In the turmoil of life, with its despair and destructiveness, your youth, like mine, has languished. But in spite of these changes, there is still some of the old loveliness blooming beneath. I can see that too."

In a tone of mocking contempt, Layna replied, "Still the worship of only that which was physical beauty in me, only that and nothing more. Even after all these years, and all these changes, is there nothing more?"

"Yes, Layna, I realized when it was too late, what I had missed when I lost you. Under your mask of perfect physical beauty, I had failed to comprehend the spiritual self that was struggling to come to light and it was I who would not let it shine forth in all its radiant glory. That long ago day in the studio when you told me of the struggle of that spiritual love for recognition I wondered why I had not seen it before, but I was enmeshed in the fetters of your physical beauty and when my rude awakening came it was too

late, for you were lost to me and I to you and we are both still lost to one another."

"But I want you to know, Kasaan, that I have suffered. I have paid and I have repented for the destruction I have wrought since that day and now I can offer you only the remnants of that love I took away in my moment of jealousy and hatred." She laid her hand in his, but he shrank back.

"No, Layna, no, it can never be. Never can the love of our youth return. I have buried that in the mire of my evil, never to be resurrected, and for that shattered love and the revenge I sought, I too have paid. Look at me and you will see the horrible truth."

"And, we were not capable at the time to understand the situation and so, each trying to revenge, wrought destruction upon ourselves and others. Instead of beautifying we have destroyed our souls and bodies."

Kasaan sat gloomily gazing into space, apparently absorbed in his own thoughts and unheeding the words of Layna.

"See, it comes upon me again!" he shrieked.

"What, what is it?" quickly demanded Layna, straining her eyes.

"The thing of evil, with its hateful eyes, its sickly countenance, its hideous form, it pursues me relentlessly. My blood becomes frozen under

its accursed gaze. See with what mockery it points an accusing finger at me! Night and day, this awful spectre haunts my thoughts and like a raving madman I shriek out to it to leave me, but it cowers ever by my side, like a thing of life, with its burning glare of hatred and vengeance!" and Kasaan's voice rang out weirdly in his terror. His whole frame was shuddering, his brow was wet, his lips were parched and dry.

Layna approached and placed her hand upon his moistened brow.

"It is the image of your other self that you see Kasaan, your evil self, and it can never be disarmed except through death. I beg of you, allow me to share with you, what is left of our lives, and let us make a pledge not to go to our death, one without the other. In death only will our souls be purged, and when we live again, Kasaan, mayhap we will pick up the threads of that greater love and weave them into a new life of noble helpfulness and purity."

There was much of the Layna he had once worshipped in this tender caress, those softly spoken words, and Kasaan closed his hands over her own as he spoke.

"Ah yes, when we live again, when we live again, when we live again," he repeated, his voice dying into a deep silence as if contemplating upon

that future life. Then he aroused himself as if struck by some new message.

"You must go away Layna. It is madness to think of our beginning our lives together now, and besides—I do not need you and you do not need me. Our work is done."

Kasaan's mouth was set in a hard line, his eyes looked upon her coldly and steadily.

Layna was silent, thoughtful, and when she spoke her voice was painfully low. "Yes, I will go. Only in that future life, after death has purged us, is there hope," and she passed slowly through the doorway and was lost in the darkness of descending night.

Kasaan crept to the door and watched her departing figure, a low moan escaping him, "Layna, I still love you, I love you—too late, too late," and he crouched upon the floor.

Save for the dim shadows that played about the room, all was now a death-like stillness. Then began an audible, incessant muttering from his lips, "hope in a future life, hope in a future life, hope in a future life," and still repeating those last words Layna had left to him, he crawled to his cot. Spasms of pain wracked his wretched limbs and even as sleep stole upon him in his suffering, her words were seen to still form themselves upon his lips.

CHAPTER XXXIII

It had been one week since Tokalon had found Demetra and taken her to his own dwelling, and most of that time she had lain in a delirium calling for Lesaria. In her moments of consciousness she clung to her child frantically, talking to it of the future days when they should find its father and all be happy together again. There were times when she fancied she held in her arms the tiny babe of seven years ago.

"Tokalon," she said one day, "tell me about the recovery of my baby, for he does seem such a baby to me even yet," and she smothered her face in his mass of curls. "Please tell me where he has been all these years. All I seem to remember is that one day when Kasaan was angry, he told me my baby was in his hands, that I and my baby belonged to him. I became distracted, maddened—all that has happened since that moment seems so vague to me, except the day when you came and took me away with you."

Tokalon took her hands. "You are not strong enough yet, Demetra, my child, that is why I have not told you, and since you have your baby with

you, be happy in that and forget the dreadful past."

"Ah yes, I am happy, so happy," Demetra whispered and pressed a kiss upon his hands, then extended one arm about the shoulder of her child and played lovingly with his brown locks, her eyes filling with tears as she said pitifully, "My baby, my pretty baby boy, has grown to be quite a man. Ah, but we shall soon find papa and he will teach you to play the violin. Your fingers are just like his, the same wonderful fingers and you will be a great violinist too." Again she lapsed into a semi-delirium, calling repeatedly for Lesaria.

The childish face looked upon her innocently and tenderly. "Mama dear, I love you, and when I was away from you, I wasn't away either for you were ever near me, and at night time your darling face was always bent above me, smiling sweetly and comfortingly upon me."

The music of the childish voice called Demetra back from her delirium. "Yes, I was ever near you, and were you always happy my dear?" she asked in an anxious tone.

"Yes, mama dear, because you were always near me."

"And were you treated kindly?" she went on.

At that moment Lilith entered the room and Demetra's question, by the decree of a wiser Fate, remained unanswered by the child. And far

better that it were, for the childish mind was spared the unhappiness of recalling certain occasions when its little life had been in danger in the hands of disreputable associates of Kasaan's, characters who had no thought, no sympathy for a human being, although it may be said that Kasaan had at all times treated the little one with a kindness that was almost unbelievable in him but his love for Demetra made him more tender toward her child. Until that day when he taunted her by saying it was in his keeping he had kept the child in the care of a very worthy nurse who had had the entire training of it. But on that day when Demetra had realized that Kasaan's influence over her had ceased and she told him how bitterly she hated him, in a moment of frenzy he abandoned the child to the care of some of his most ruthless associates, from whom Tokalon rescued it.

Lilith, holding Demetra's face between her hands, looking earnestly upon her, spoke in a sympathetic manner, "Tokalon sent me a message that you were here, that he had found you, and Demetra, my dear, I am so happy to see you again."

"I am happy too, Lilith, very happy to be back with my baby, with you, with Tokalon. But Lesaria, why does he not come? Where is he, Tokalon?"

"You will see him shortly, my Demetra child, before very long you will be reunited." As Tokalon spoke his voice was grave, almost solemn and his eyes were downcast as if he had uttered a benediction upon her.

"Yes, but it has been a week now and oh! so often have I called to him. At times I have fancied he sat here beside me, playing to me as he once did, but I fear he has not played for anyone in all these years. I have broken his heart and stolen the music from his soul, but he is struggling to play again, he *is* playing again, I can hear him! Yes Lesaria, play! Play! Play! Go out and play for the people!" she cried, and fell back in a swoon.

Tokalon placed his hand upon the pale forehead; he watched; he waited; he was silent. Demetra moved again, she opened her eyes. Over her lovely features there spread a smile of sweet rest and contentment, a smile that enhanced all the more the pure beauty of her face. Her lips moved.

"The room is filled with delicately airy forms; they are singing to me, calling for me and now I hear a glorious melody—the melody they play on Mars. Lesaria is playing it! Oh, how beautifully the scene unfolds before me, taking me back long ago to the theatre, the opera. We were all there, he and Lilith and I; our soul home on Mars.

I am going back and Lesaria is coming to join me; he will play for the people there; we will be happy again. Take good care of my baby. Good-bye, my dear ones."

Her final words echoed like a faint, fragrant essence diffused through the stillness of the room and a wondrous light, violet-hued flooded over the spot where Demetra lay, instantly enveloping her within its transparent glory. It made a swift flight upward and the place where she had lain was empty. A deep hush permeated the room. The plaintive voice of Demetra's child was the first to break that throbbing silence.

"Mama is gone; she has left us. She has gone to papa."

"Yes, she has left us for a higher realm," murmured Lilith.

"She has returned to her other home, to be with papa," slowly and tenderly repeated Tokalon, and as he took the child into his arms, a lofty, yet shadowy touch of sadness darkened and glorified his majestic countenance.

Turning to Lilith, he continued, "How sweet is the privilege of watching, guarding and nurturing the soul of this little one, the child of Demetra and Lesaria, and the duty devolves upon you and me, Lilith. We have a young life to guide through the changing years, a life to which is given the gifts of heaven, the genius of his father.

"And will I see mama and papa some day?"

"Yes, my dear, you shall see them again some day," answered Lilith as she pressed a kiss upon the forehead so like that of Lesaria Vinson.

Then turning to Tokalon, "The scene that Demetra saw is the same one I saw that day of my illness in the Electric City, when Lesaria gave his brilliant performance in the Electric Hall."

"Yes, you and Demetra and Lesaria, bound by a kindred tie not of this earth, have lived on a plane of the same high creative consciousness and witnessed scenes visible only to those who are in complete harmony as you three have been, and sensitive to the higher vibrations within the cosmos."

CHAPTER XXXIV

The soft light of the moon flickered through the window, casting a faint glimmer upon a bed in one corner of the room; a room that once had rung with a baby's joyous laughter, with a mother's lullaby. In the indistinct shadow, a face was outlined; a face sickly white, hollow, filled with the anguish of years of pent-up suffering. The sunken eyes glistened with a strange beauty, revealing in their tragic depths, a tale of sadness and of misery. There remained but this phantom self of the famous violinist, who seven years before had thrilled the world with his music. In those weary years he had wandered over the face of the earth, unceasingly searching for some trace of his lost wife and babe, and poverty and broken health and spirits had forced him back alone to the little home upon the mountainside, the home that had first harbored those three lives.

Here Lesaria Vinson lived, away from the world, existing in a brain-desert of silence; a mocking hollowness languishing in his soul, meaningless notes crying out from his violin. He had laid his beloved violin tenderly away and in

those years of searching wandering, it had never been removed from the luxuriant case which so jealously protected it. The muse of music had departed from Lesaria's soul when he lost his Demetra. No more did those precious melodies respond to the finely sensitive fingers and in a moment of maddening suffering and desperation, when he laid aside his fond instrument, her soul, his soul, were laid aside with the soul of his violin.

Day after day he wandered aimlessly through the pine groves half fancying that in their brutal silence was held the secret of his loved ones and in mute appeal he sought to wrest the answer from them.

As he lay upon his bed, an illuminating smile overspread his features; his long thin fingers moved restlessly as if striving for something beyond their grasp. He arose and went to the case where his beloved violin was sheltered. Eagerly he unlocked it and in feverish haste he drew his violin from the soft covering. He fondled and caressed it as a mother would her child. He lifted it to his chin, he ran his fingers up and down the strings. Those broken melodies seemed to be bringing a message to him. He was conscious of an intangible power about the instrument which strove to speak to him through those melodies. His prostrate soul seemed to touch

more divine heights; he wanted to play before his dear public; he would play for them again!

With a sweep of the bow over the strings the notes rang out in fragrant ecstasies and then—silence! All is a sickening stillness! His fingers remain curved upon the strings but there was no sensation of response. It lay like a thing of death in his hands. Slowly, almost tragically he placed it again within its silken wrappings and staggered to his bed, sinking down upon it with a half-stifled moan, “Gone! Gone!”

The long hours of the night passed slowly on and at last the morning sun broke over the hills, her bright rays sending out a cheerful greeting to Lesaria Vinson. On this particular morning, taking his violin under his arm—his only companion—he went out for his customary stroll. Since last night’s event, he had wept, he had prayed, for the return of his master muse which so suddenly and cruelly deserted him at the moment of renewed inspiration, renewed hope, renewed ambition. Perhaps the close companionship of his cherished violin would give back to him the lost melodies. His fingers now constantly ached to feel the throbbing of the strings beneath them. For one week he lived with it, coaxing, talking to it and gradually it responded as if it were a human voice consoling and pitying him.

Then one evening as Lesaria sat delicately,

tenderly fondling the sensitive strings, a compelling voice spoke to him.

"Play! Play! Play!" it urged. "Go out and play for the people!"

He sat back and felt as if he were being carried away. He was in a vast hall; a great multitude had assembled. How madly, how dramatically they greeted him! He began playing for them and under the spell of his music they were transformed. Coming back from this reverie, he sprang up with fresh vigor and enthusiasm, his thin face alive with new hope. In his eyes shone a deep luster. Yes, he was going back to the people to thrill them once more with the divine beauty of his music!

With his precious violin he emerged from that abode which had sheltered him, his music and his memories apart from the world.

CHAPTER XXXV

The auditorium is crowded. Darkness is upon the stage, save for a little shaft of light which falls over an approaching figure, and as its glow catches that face so shrunken, so pale, so full of suffering, yet at this moment divinely beautiful, an audible whisper vibrates through the house.

Like a phantom ghost from another world, a grave sprite of the distant past, Lesaria Vinson stands before them. At last he has come out of those years of suffering, of loneliness, of pitiless waiting in which the voice of his violin has been silenced. As he stands again before his audience what a conflict rages in that beautiful soul—what love, what tragedy, what eternal joys, what sorrows! The people love him, he is still their idol, the supreme genius!

But little do they realize what they are demanding of him at this performance. Other players had made an attempt to reach Mars with their music but no tangible message had yet come from Mars to the people of the earth. And now their faith lay only in Lesaria Vinson. He well understood that this performance in which he had been

almost forced to appear, might be the fiasco of his nearly finished life, but it mattered little—at least through his appearance again the people would be satisfied.

The great tone magnifiers were set in place and focused on Mars. The transformer, which was to transform the tones into their relative colors, was also ready and connected with the second transformer, the two instruments being in tune and governed by the musician sending the message.

The great lenses which would illuminate the sky in various colors according to the intensity and will of the musician, were placed at various centers on the earth's surface.

Lesaria Vinson is to play for them a creation of his spirit mind! His fingers curve upon the bow, he touches the G string drawing a long steady tone. The magnifier and transformer instantly respond showing he has not lost the wonderful tone for which he is noted. The color is gray expressing no particular emotion. But Lesaria Vinson seeing the tone transformed into a color finds something new within himself. His fingers meet the strings with a new-born determination.

Suddenly the veil of light which makes him visible vanishes and the stage is in total darkness. We do not see the violinist—other lands, other

peoples dazzle our vision. Across the paths of memory there surges the spell of a melody born of the spirits of heaven and hell, a melody captured in the mystery wanderings of the composer's soul, and brought forth into the vanishing light of day, echoing and re-echoing across the threshold of eternity.

How furiously the notes pile up beneath those gaunt, bony fingers! Each impassioned string groans and trembles as if it were the breaking of a human heart string, the notes pealing forth softly at first, then giving way to a wild and sweeping strain of dramatic frenzy! He takes his audience through all the shades of joy and fury until they scarce can realize they are listening to the voice of the violin. They almost fear Lesaria Vinson. They whisper one to the other, "He has gone mad!" Yet they cannot escape the spell of his playing. They sit immovable, almost afraid to breathe, fancying their very breath will disturb the gorgeous scene into which they have been transported.

Music in the sky is something new to them. Little by little as the tone of the violin increases and decreases and the tone magnifiers respond accordingly the sky changes from one color to another. Now it is golden and as the tone increases it becomes a beautiful red with lightning flashes of gold here and there.

Suddenly the music ceases; for an instant the player holds his bow aloft. He hears a distant voice speaking to him. He is searching for something that fills the air. Then as if he had captured a spirit voice he begins to improvise lightly as a whispering echo. A scarcely distinguishable melody floats out of the great expanse. White draped figures, invisible to the human eye, move to and fro singing a strain of triumphant joy, a strain too soft for mortal ear to grasp. The audience is lulled into a magic listlessness. A curious mingling of thousands of sweet-tinkling voices delicately swishes through the air; misty shapes dart in fleeting shadows about the stage. A million different themes pour forth in a volume of tone scarcely louder than a far-off silence.

The great virtuoso has only been playing with tone and tone quality, a few scales, now and then a minor passage while he watches the light vary in intensity. Can he play his new concerto? Is this moment the great climax of his career? He hesitates a moment, the spirit of his beloved Demetra has called to him, he hears her voice, sees her form, and into his soul and into his violin has been whispered that forgotten music.

Little by little he decreases the runs on the G string. Little by little the red begins to fade from the sky. Then all is green with varied flashes of intensity, now almost white, then dark-

ening to a near black as he adds string after string in his rapid execution, and returns to the G string again. With one terrific crash of tone covering all the strings of the violin, varied colors flash through the heavens. The melody rises in pitch beyond the sense of hearing. The audience gaze upon the player spellbound. Lesaria Vinson is master of the elements!

The people can hear nothing—and yet he is playing. A mysterious silence holds them. They are afraid but they cannot escape this weird spell. His violin, hands, body are illumined with fast-changing colors. With what dramatic force he makes his motions! Ah, but the people cannot understand! *He* can hear the music he is creating—color-music—audible only to his inner ears.

But in the sky wonderful flowers are forming. A beautiful red rose is seen. The tone now lightens, the runs become more rapid and green foliage appears. Then the long steady strokes of the bow, once more the rapid execution and perfect intonation, suddenly changing the key a quarter of a tone and as quickly returning, and lilies are forming in the heavens, pure white in color, then blue, rapidly changing from blue to yellow, then to red. The sky is a flower garden of Easter Lilies, some small, some large, and with one tremendous rush of sound they transform into one

massive flower hovering over the earth as if to say, "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."

The soul of man—how far does it extend about him? The body, the personality of Lesaria Vinson is being effaced. For the first time, color-music—the music of Mars—was recreated into sound. Lesaria Vinson had not broken the faith of the people. In his final farewell he had materialized for them the Melody from Mars. Quietly and slowly, one by one the audience left their seats. The divine power of the music to which they had listened had enthralled them in chains of silence. They had been given a glimpse of Heaven. They could not speak; they only knew they had seen and heard something that exists beyond the earth plane, and their silence was a token of infinite respect, a monument to their beloved genius.

But now the earth is trembling. Is it the magnifier? No, the transformer is transforming into sound the floral message which Mars is returning. The people had often felt the vibrations when other players were attempting to get a message. Did Lesaria Vinson create the great lily? No one knew, and he was gone, but how or where? Yet the lily still remained and the earth continued to tremble.

Mars had heard her own and was sending the answer. Another lily and then another until the

heavens were aglow with monster lilies and still the earth trembled but no sound was heard. Then a low rumbling as if the bass of a world orchestra had been created and flowers—new species never seen by mortal man, with colors beyond human comprehension—were filling the heavens as if the flower garden of God had been opened to view.

The roll of the bass grew and grew, here and there vivid flashes of lightning rent the sky and for an instant changed the color; the earth moaned as if grieved at its wickedness and with a tremendous rush of wind and a roar that human mind could not describe, all was darkness.

The inhabitants of the earth, where were they? Where were the magnifiers? The transformers? No one knew.

But another moon had been born and where water had been land appeared. And where mountains were there rolled the billows of a mighty ocean. And those who had survived could only talk among themselves for the new generation did not understand. But the earth had been purged of its selfishness. A new era, the spiritual age—the age of the superman—had dawned.

FINALE

Out of the chaos from which came the birth of the new world there had remained a relic of the old world, the Electric City and its inhabitants. In all its radiant glory, its exotic splendor, like an enchanted fairyland it had remained as an emblem of the creative genius of the past era.

Dwelling within this fair city was a great philosopher and scientist, a noble character whose leadership in the new order of things was everywhere predominant. He was the son of Demetra and Lesaria Vinson.

To Lilith had come immortality. Making her home upon whatever planet she chose, she could project her consciousness to mother earth and visit the Electric City at will.

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